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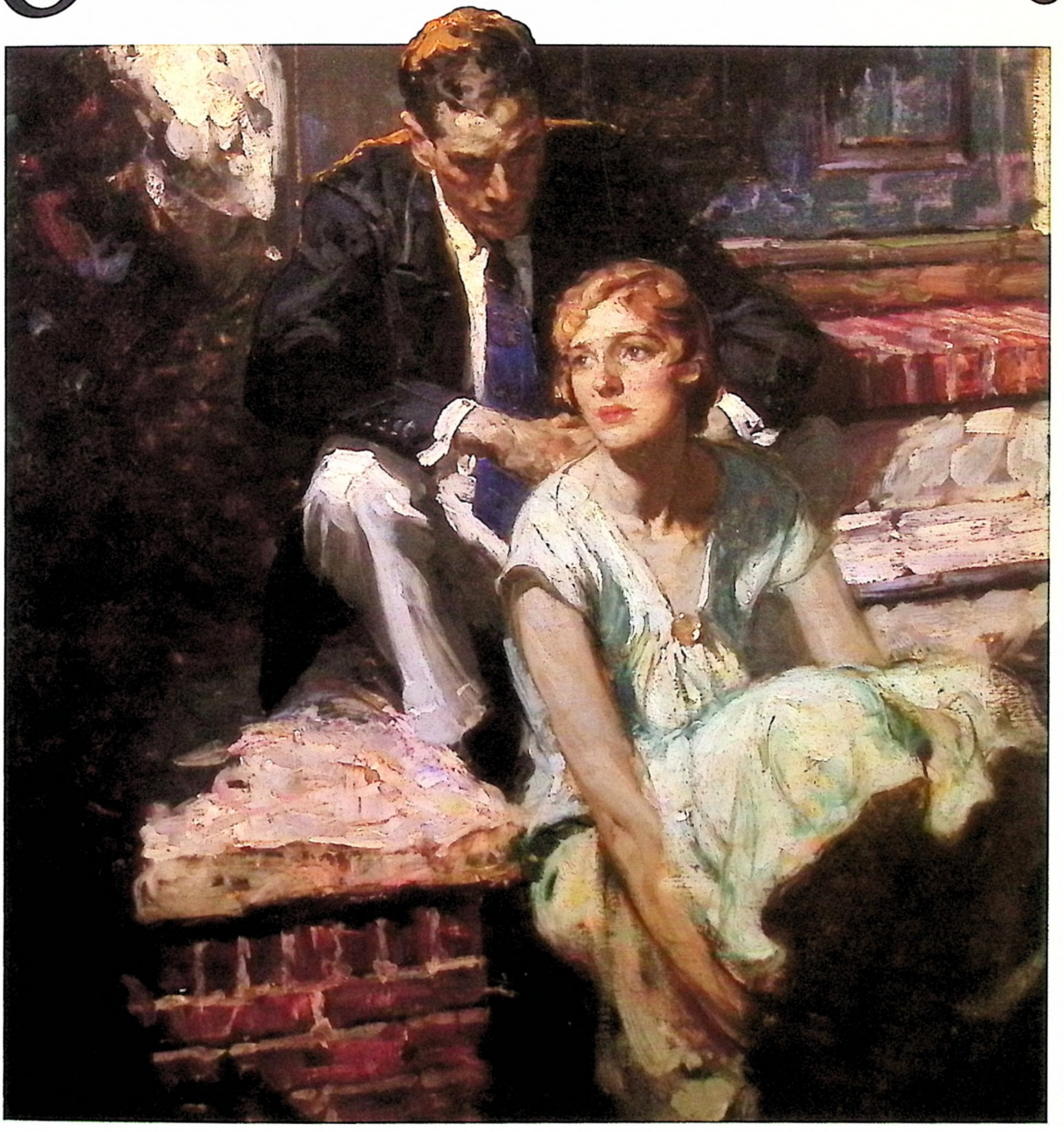

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY
Saul Tepper
(1899–1980)
For *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1928
Oil on canvas

DANIEL ZIMMER
EDITOR - PUBLISHER - DESIGNER
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ILLUSTRATION LOGO BY
GERARD HUERTA

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From the Editor...

I'm very happy to announce that the second printing of *The Art of Dean Cornwell* is now available! This printing is basically the same as the first edition, but I have made a few color adjustments throughout and added a few new illustrations. I think this version looks a bit improved from the first. You may order the book through my website, or see the ad on the inside back cover of this issue.

Another new book, *The Life and Art of Bernie Fuchs* by David Apatoff, is at the printer now and will be released in July. I am accepting pre-orders now.

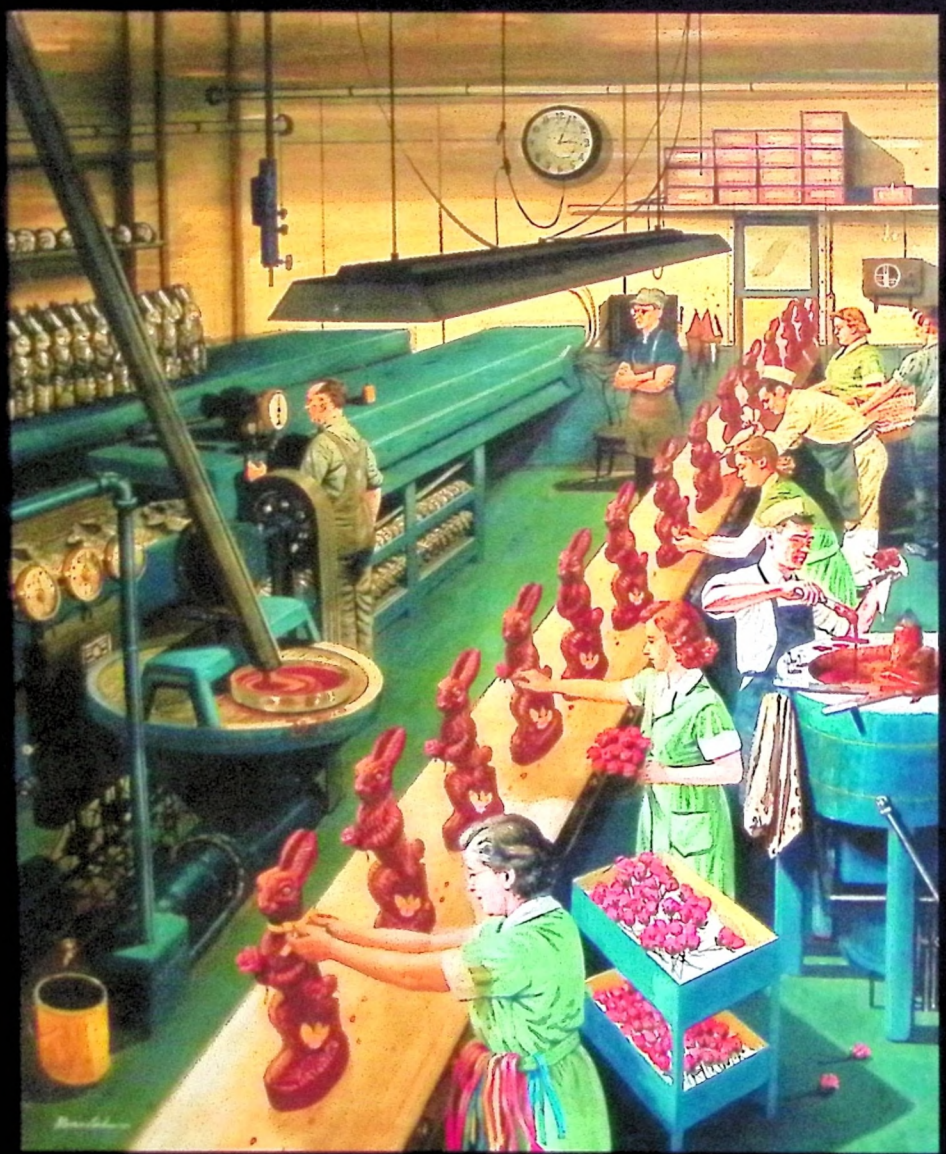
Due to popular demand, I have just begun working on a re-issue of *Reynold Brown: A Life in Pictures*. This book will include at least 16 additional pages of artwork not seen in the first edition. Stay tuned for further announcements about this project soon! Also in the works—books on the artists Harry Anderson, Austin Briggs, Coby Whitmore, and more! If you aren't on my email list, please visit www.illustration-magazine.com to add your address to my database. I will send out a notice as soon as these books become available for pre-order.

Thanks again to all of you for your support of The Illustrated Press!

Daniel Zimmer, Publisher

the illustrated gallery

Stevan Dohanos (1907–1994)



Cover for the *Saturday Evening Post*, March 25, 1950
Oil on board, 36 x 24 inches

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Stevan Dohanos (1907–1994)

Cover for the *Saturday Evening Post*, November 25, 1950
Gouache on board, 25 x 19 5/8 inches

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Editorial illustration for *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1928. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Saul Tepper, circa 1950s

The Art of SAUL TEPPER

by Daniel Zimmer

STARTING OUT

Saul Tepper was born to Eastern European immigrants Max and Sarah Tepper on December 20, 1899, on the lower east side of Manhattan. Growing up in a world of pushcarts and poverty, Saul learned that hard work would be the key to his success in life, and from his earliest days on he was a diligent worker.

His art education began at age 17 when he won a correspondence course with the Landon School of Art, where he briefly studied cartooning. At this time he sold his first drawing to *Motion Picture* magazine. While working during the day, Tepper attended Cooper Union five nights a week, studying composition under William Leftwich Dodge. On weekends he enrolled in painting classes at the Art Students League, where he was taught by George Bridgman.

After graduating from Cooper Union, Saul acquired a job in a fashion catalogue studio as a lettering man. There, he had his first chance to do some figure work in oil. His earliest commercial art work threw him before a bevy of beautiful girls—where he lettered the words "voile," "poplin," "linen" and so on at their feet.

In 1920, he married Beatrice Lindenburg, and they had two children, Albert and Joan.

HARVEY DUNN

For the next few years, Saul's work developed under the guidance of his teacher Harvey Dunn at the Grand Central Art School, and at Dunn's Tenafly, New Jersey, studio, where Dunn taught his students to "paint a little less of the facts and a little more of the spirit."

As a student of Dunn, Tepper could trace his artistic lineage back to the father of American illustration himself, Howard Pyle. Pyle had taught the art of illustration to a select group of young artists in the Brandywine area of Pennsylvania, a group that included N.C. Wyeth, Frank Schoonover, Stanley Arthurs, and Harvey Dunn. In a period when American artists and critics looked to Europe for guidance and inspiration, Pyle encouraged his students to seek out and paint uniquely

Billboard illustration for Piedmont Cigarettes. Oil on canvas, 21" x 46". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

American themes. It was Harvey Dunn who carried on Pyle's teaching in his classes in Leonia, New Jersey. Like Pyle, Dunn inspired his students to make illustration an artistic force—to go beyond the superficial details of a fictional incident—to look for and to paint the epic.

Among Saul's classmates were Dean Cornwell, Jules Gotlieb, Dan Content, and Harold Von Schmidt, all of whom had backgrounds suited to such epic themes as American history and the Old West. Saul felt handicapped by being from an immigrant lower East side Jewish family with no American roots, and he asked Dunn how he could possibly meet such a lofty goal. Dunn drew him out, asking about his family and his experiences growing up in New York. He pointed out the rich vein of subject matter Saul had at his fingertips, and encouraged him to paint what he knew best, to make it important by telling the truth about it. He said, "With a background like yours, you ought to make some great paintings."

To Saul this was a liberating challenge. He worked to bring a new sense of authenticity to his work, so that a viewer could walk into his pictures and become a participant. Some of his best paintings are of pawn shops, backstage theatres, and old bookstores, commonplace scenes that seem completely real in their execution.

Saul's admiration and respect for Dunn was so great that he continued to make pilgrimages back to Leonia for critiques or for painting sessions from a model to improve his art.

Tepper wrote about Dunn in his introduction to a Harvey Dunn exhibition catalogue published in 1983 by the Museum of American Illustration at the Society of Illustrators, New York:

As one who was privileged to study under Harvey Dunn, I look back with gratitude for his teaching and guidance and in admiration for this great man. He didn't teach technique or method but instead ideas, feelings, the aesthetics of picture making. His love for pictures was contagious and the philosophy he expounded was inspiring. He gave us something to reach for. It was more like a religion and we were his disciples. We believed, and his teachings became our "Bible."

Everything we had, everything we were, and everything we felt went into each painting. Our aims were higher, our dreams greater and our ambitions deeper. Knowledge was one thing—but feeling, expression, love of craft and love for what we were doing were what counted most.

He was first and foremost an illustrator. He was proud when the coveted rank of National Academician was conferred upon him by the National Academy of Design in 1945, because he always believed that no great chasm exists between so-called Fine Art and Illustration, as so many dilettantes argue. "The Old Masters were really illustrators," he said. "With their pictures they told the story of Christianity."

He was the greatest painter-illustrator America has ever produced, and as a teacher was at his unchallenged best. A man to be remembered and revered.

Harvey Dunn was a giant of a man, in body and spirit. His strong chiseled features looked like he might have been carved out of Mount Rushmore. Grant Reynard, one of Dunn's Leonia students, described him thus:

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Amos Sewell (1901–1983)

Cover for the *Saturday Evening Post*, December 12, 1959
Oil on board, 26 x 24 inches

THE ILLUSTRATED GALLERY HAS PUBLISHED TWO NEW BOOKS!

How Illustrators Created Their Art is the first of a two-book set. In it, James C. Thompson provides a unique and colorful account of how advances in image production and reproduction technologies during the last decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century improved the appearance and effectiveness of advertising and illustration art.

In the second book, **Painting America's Portrait**, Mr. Thompson shows how illustrators applied their unique skills to sell a war to the American people, and how after the war was won, their war-era imagery was used to fabricate a new American heritage.

Both of these books are now available! Visit www.IllustratedGallery.com for more information.

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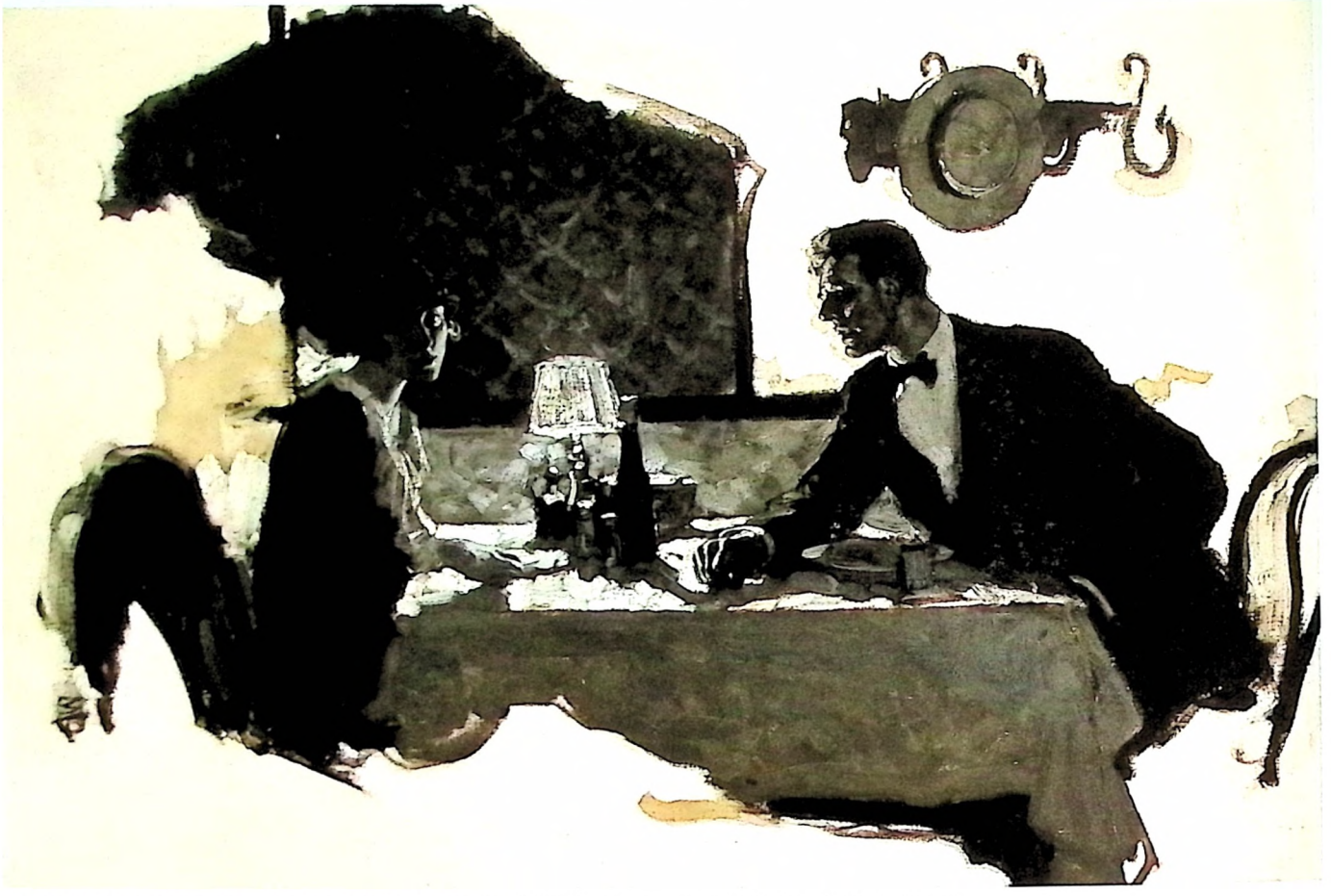


Editorial Illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Oil on canvas, 28" x 32". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Editorial illustration, 1931. Oil on canvas, 28" x 41". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Advertising Illustration, 1926. Oil on canvas, 26" x 20". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Editorial Illustration, 1928. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

"He was a whale of a man, a veritable pioneer hulk of a man, with a head reminding you of a cross between an Indian chief and a Viking. He looked as though he could easily bite a spike in two with one crunch of his broad jaws."

And yet, he taught us with tenderness and a gentle understanding at times, and occasionally with an authoritarian dominance. He never said "no" to anyone who asked for his help. (This I know from the many times I asked.) In a letter to Albin Henning, a former student, he wrote: "In fact, the most fruitful and worthwhile thing I have ever done has been to teach."

A PROFESSIONAL ILLUSTRATOR

In 1925, Tepper joined the Van Dyke Studios and he soon branched out as an illustrator. The first sample he made from his new studio was purchased by *Liberty* magazine, who created a story around it. *Collier's* followed shortly thereafter, as did the Curtis Publishing group (*Ladies' Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Country Gentleman*) then came *Woman's Home Companion*, *The American*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Good Housekeeping*. By the mid-1930s, Saul's style had become recognizable and commanded top dollar. His advertising clients included General Electric, Chesterfield, Mobil Oil, Texaco, Packard, Coca-Cola, Stetson Hats, Magnavox, and many more.

The Tepper family moved from Flushing to One University Place, and Saul moved his studio first to the Lincoln Square Studio, and then, for 13 of his most productive years, to the Hotel Des Artistes.

Tepper soon became one of the top illustrators in America, a position he held for two decades. During those years he also taught or lectured at the Cooper Union, Pratt Institute, the Society of Illustrators, and at the New York Art Directors Club. After one such lecture, illustrator John Gannam remarked, "Where the hell did you learn all that?"

During his career, Tepper was honored with the Harvard Award (1929), the Newspaper Award (1936), the Annual Advertising Award (1940), and the Laskinlamb Institute Award (1943). He was elected to the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame in 1980.

RESEARCHING THE PICTURE

The foundation of Tepper's illustrations was thorough research. "Whatever drawing you get, whatever picture you get to do, go directly to the source for your information, whenever it is possible. I don't mean go to China for a Chinese picture, but go to the Chinese government," he told students during a lecture at Pratt Institute in 1947.

The quality of this research enabled Tepper to create believable pictures. Artist Ardis Hughes, who apprenticed to the illustrator, recalled: "Tepper taught me to psych myself into the

Editorial Illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post*, April 13, 1928. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

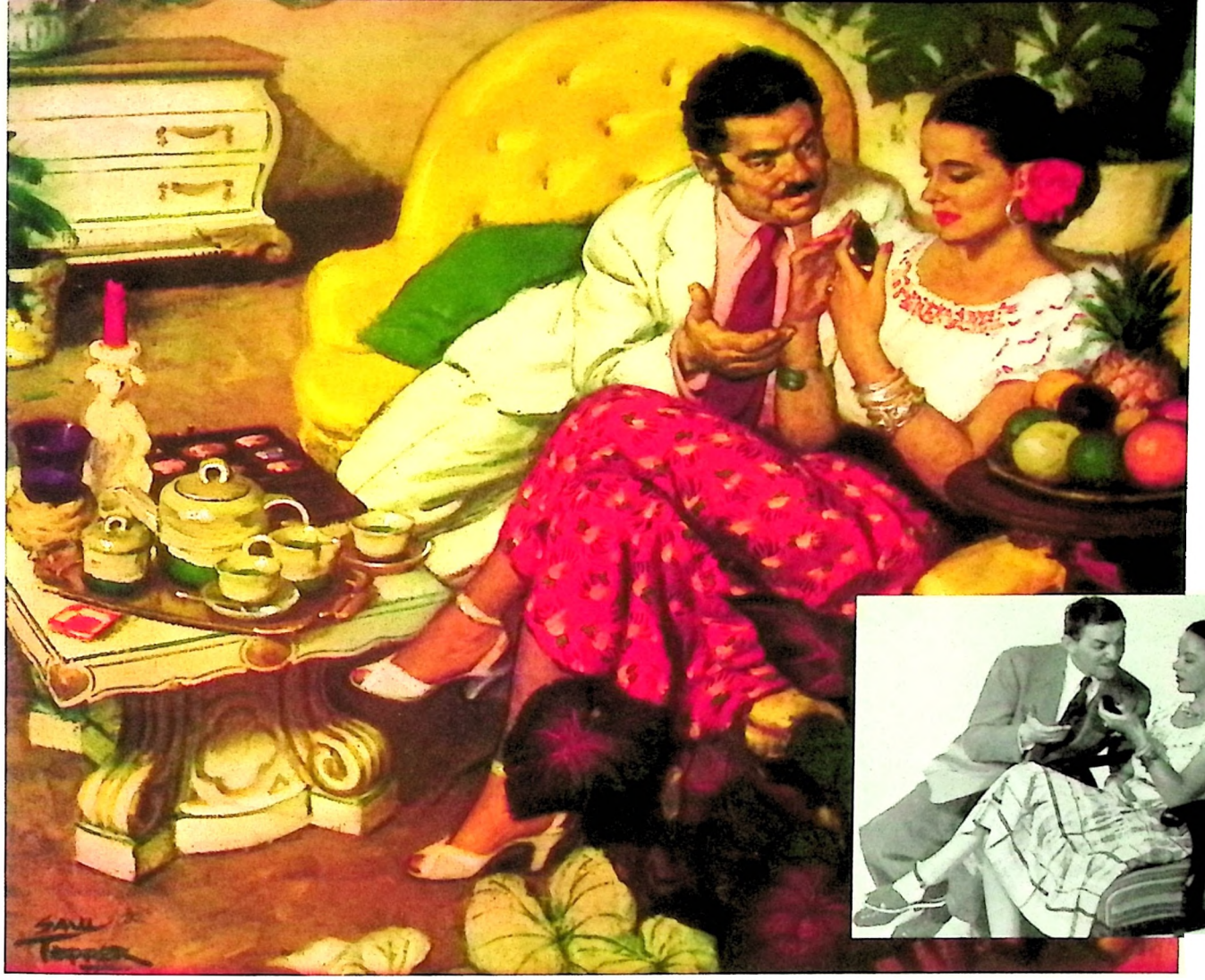
Advertising illustration for General Electric Refrigerators, 1930. Oil on canvas, 38" x 30". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Advertising illustration for General Electric Refrigerators, 1931. Oil on canvas, 36" x 36". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Editorial illustration. 1940s. Oil on canvas, 32" x 32". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Editorial illustration for *American Magazine*, August 26, 1933. Oil on canvas, 31" x 44". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Editorial illustration. 1928. Oil on canvas, 36" x 30". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com



Editorial illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post*, February 21, 1948. INSET: Saul Tepper poses with his model

creation of an image as a three-step process: Paint what you see. Paint what you know. Paint what you want to see. If you're confident enough in this process, they'll believe you even if you're wrong."

His approach to research paid dividends in a series of logging illustrations done for the *Saturday Evening Post*. When he got the first of what was to be several of these assignments, Tepper admitted that he knew nothing of logging, but he dove wholeheartedly into the research, interviewing the story's author at length to get the proper feeling. Saul soon became known as an expert on logging and lumberjacks.

Tepper would also adhere as strictly as possible to the text he was illustrating, though this could often be a challenge. This happened to Tepper when he read the description of Burnham Carter's Cuban heroine in an assignment for the *Saturday Evening Post*, published February 21, 1948. The lady in the story was described as pretty and plump. This presented a unique problem, as none of the model agencies he called upon listed any "plump" girls among their ranks.

"So," Tepper said without the least sadness, "I was forced to spend several evenings in New York City nightspots searching out a model for myself. I made the rounds of clubs popular with the Latins, and one night I saw the right girl." Not wishing to test Latin jealousy, Tepper waited until the girl departed. Then he approached a young man he had seen talking with her and explained his wishes. Soon an appointment was arranged. Tepper persuaded the young lady to pose for him (without once mentioning the word "plump.")

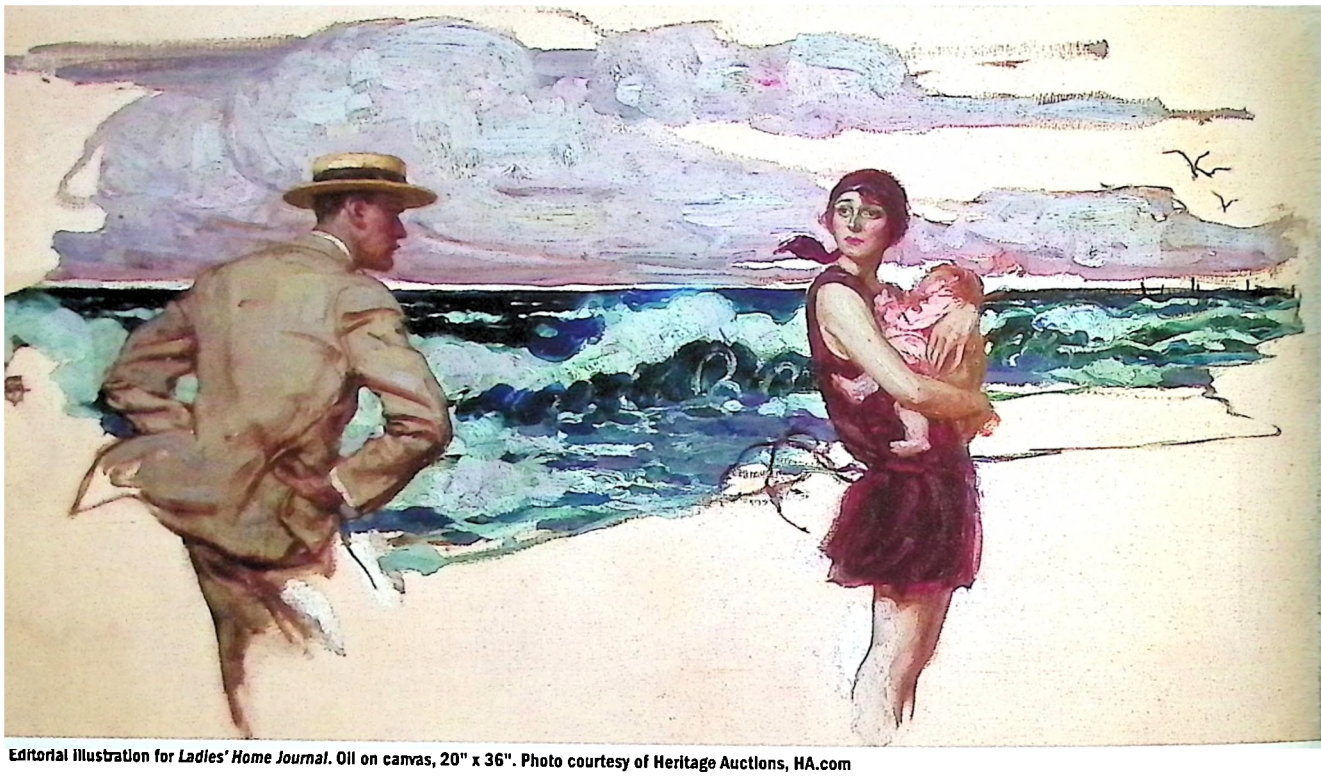
"But ten minutes before she was to pose, she sent word that she had to leave town—and I was stuck again," Tepper said.

The gentleman who introduced Tepper to the girl saved him from another tour of nightclubs on learning of his dilemma. There was a dancer, he said, who resembled the first lady. "She fitted the role fine," Tepper said.

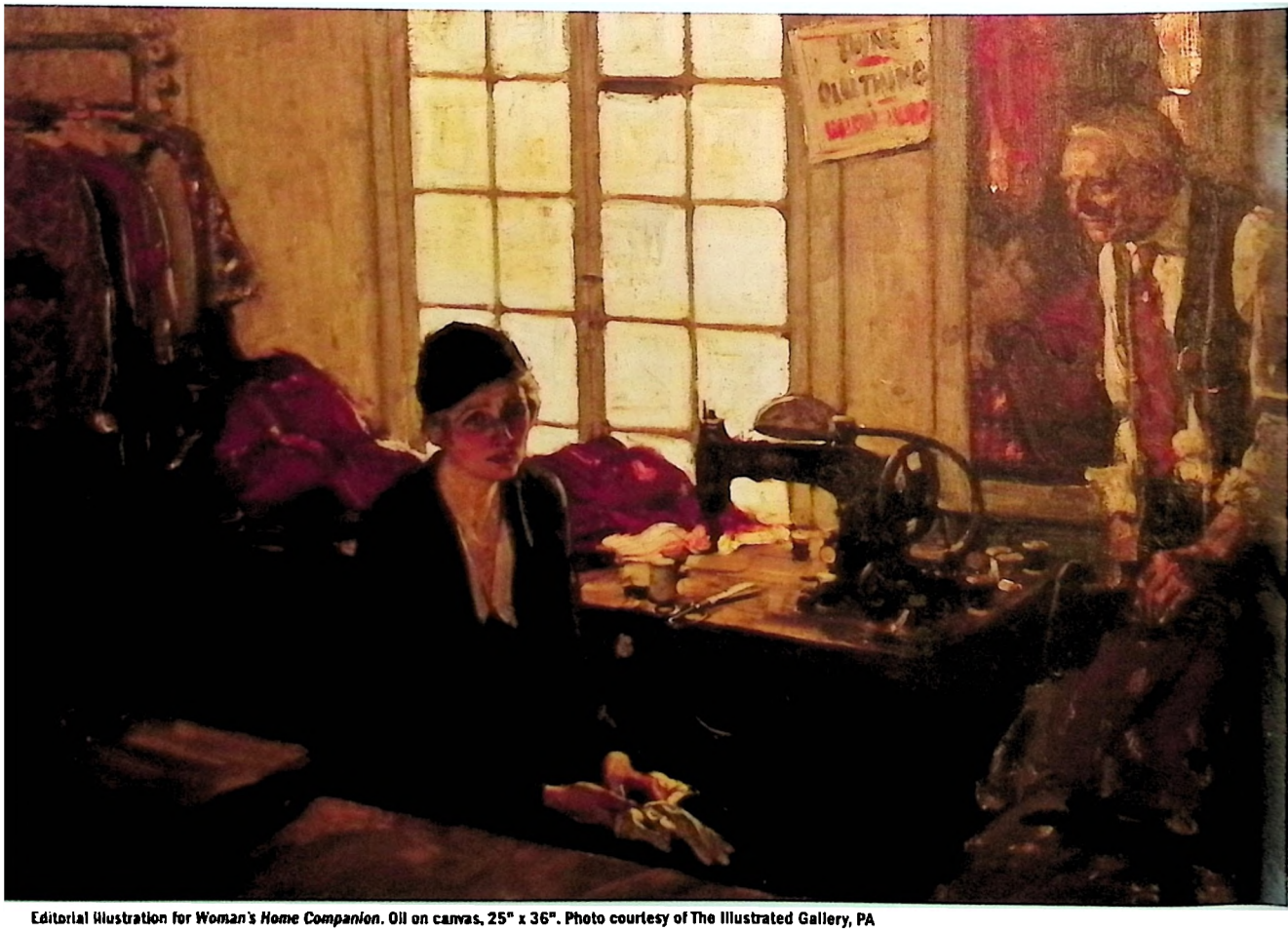
Tepper also needed a model for the character Corbo, described as fat and unsavory. He sketched the body of the fat man from an overweight professional model, but borrowed some of his own features for the face. "That was as close as I have ever come to a self-portrait," he admitted.

On another occasion, Tepper was called upon to illustrate a story by Robert Carse of the Sahara in the *Post* of September 4, 1948. The story, "Raid in the Desert," involved camel corps. Tepper visited New York's Central Park Zoo to gain some familiarity with camels.

"It was the sort of familiarity that breeds contempt," he said, "for, to put it mildly, camels stink. Not having a camel of my



Editorial illustration for *Ladies' Home Journal*. Oil on canvas, 20" x 36". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com



Editorial illustration for *Woman's Home Companion*. Oil on canvas, 25" x 36". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Editorial Illustration. Oil on canvas, 26" x 40". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Editorial Illustration. Oil on canvas, 16" x 36". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Advertising illustration for Heinz Tomato Juice, 1932. Oil on canvas, 13" x 17". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Advertising illustration for Heinz Tomato Juice, 1932. Oil on canvas, 13" x 17". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

own, I made pencil sketches from pictures I had gathered to familiarize myself with the construction of the creature, and went to the zoo for further study. Imagine taking a girl out for a camel ride and asking her what kind of perfume she is wearing. However, the smells, whether camels or girls, are necessary, I think, to the making of good pictures."

Most of his research was done at the New York Public Library and at movie studios, where he got still shots from old desert movies. Sometimes gathering a small bit of detail would waste an inordinate amount of time. In this particular case, Tepper wanted to know the exact color of the stripe on the breeches of character Captain Malvaux in the story. He asked the French Consulate and they said French officers wore the same khaki uniforms as Americans, and after talking to at least eight people there, all of whom were anxious to help, he found that nobody could tell him the color of the stripe that denoted the armored unit.

"They suggested I write to Washington," Tepper said, "but five days of that was enough."

So Captain Malvaux was not only lost in the desert, but he lost his stripe—which Tepper added, "I am sure is better than wearing the wrong one."

COMPREHENSIVE SKETCHES

While reading a manuscript, Tepper would make innumerable sketches to work out various aspects of his composition. He would rough in the figures and background elements, arranging patterns of light and dark. He believed a strong composition was invaluable in achieving the proper emotional ties between his subjects. He would manipulate the action in an illustration by working on the way the viewer's eye would travel through the frame.

Tepper's compositional skill did not escape the attention of his fellow illustrators. Andrew Loomis, a major figure in illustration history, wrote to Tepper in 1948: "Don't let anybody kid you, you have the soundest approach to picture-making that there is. A few simple values, arranged in pattern or design... You keep your color in the light where it belongs [with] a definite separation of light and shadow...DAMN GOOD STUFF."

Once his concepts were thoroughly refined, Tepper would seek out models to create the finished work. He would refine the studies of his subjects, paying close attention to the posture and facial expression of his figures. While primarily working in line, he would occasionally indicate shading in the faces.

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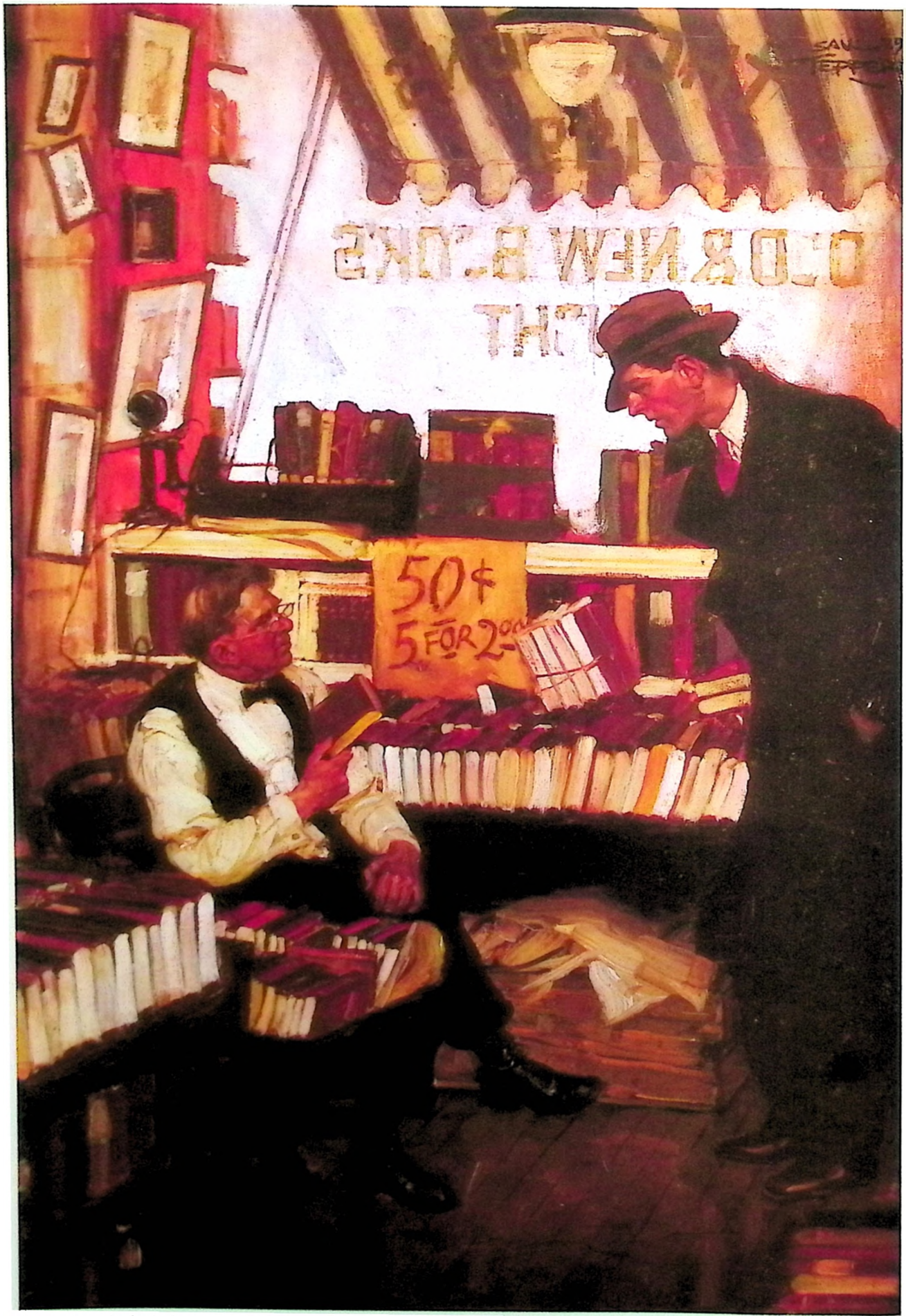
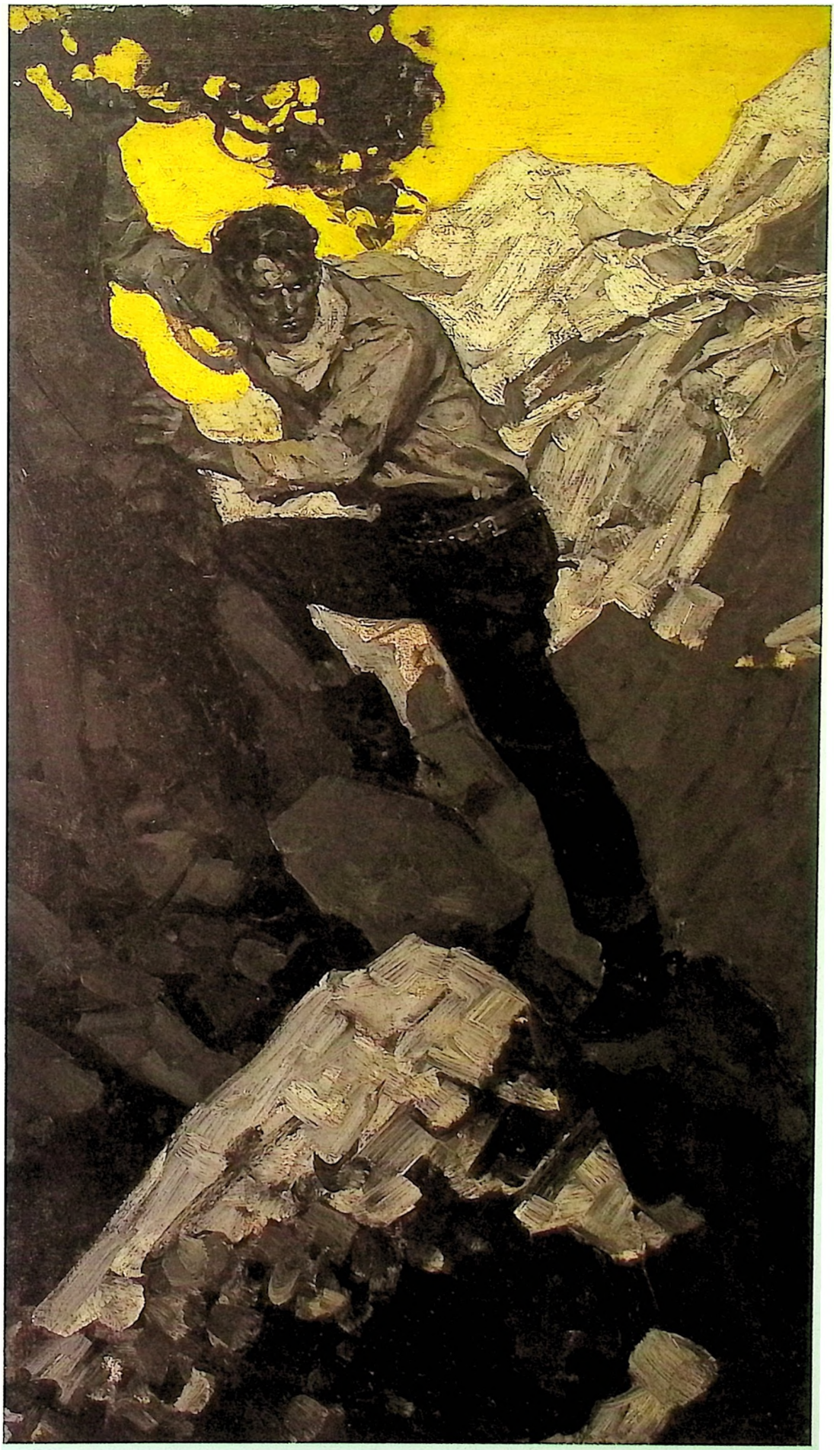
Howard Pyle and His Students
American Illustration
19th and early 20th century
Delaware paintings

THE BOOKSTORE
Saul Tepper
(1899 - 1987)
Oil on canvas; 35" x 25"; 1929
Labeled: Saturday Evening Post 1929



Editorial illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post*, 1929. Oil on canvas, 35" x 23". Photo courtesy of Schoonover Studios, DE



Editorial Illustration, 1931. Oil on canvas, 37" x 21". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Editorial illustration for *McCall's*, 1933. Oil on canvas, 35" x 22". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Throughout most of his career, Tepper worked almost exclusively from live models. As he recalled in one of his lectures: "Back in those days, the artist looked down on anyone who used photographs, because we had all been to art school and learned to draw from life." But as modeling fees rose at the end of the 1930s, Saul was forced to begin working from photographs. Even so, his solid training and compositional skills allowed him to overcome any limitations imposed by the two-dimensional images.

Finally, Tepper would submit his sketch to the art director for approval. The preliminary work was so complete that art directors seldom called for major changes. In an article published in *The Packard Cormorant*, Tepper remembered doing 52 preliminaries for a single Packard ad. The idea of going the extra mile in his assignments was typical of Tepper's relationship with his art directors. In the Pratt Institute lecture of 1947, he said: "Once you accept a job from anyone the price means nothing. I always aim to make the job the best I have ever done. Give the guy a little more than he pays for and he will always come back."

For Tepper, illustrating was a privilege. "The highest compliment one may pay an artist is the exchange of money for the artist's work," former apprentice Mason Combs quoted Tepper as saying. "People lie and steal and kill for money. So money for the artist's work is the best of compliments." Tepper, in turn, was quoting Harvey Dunn.

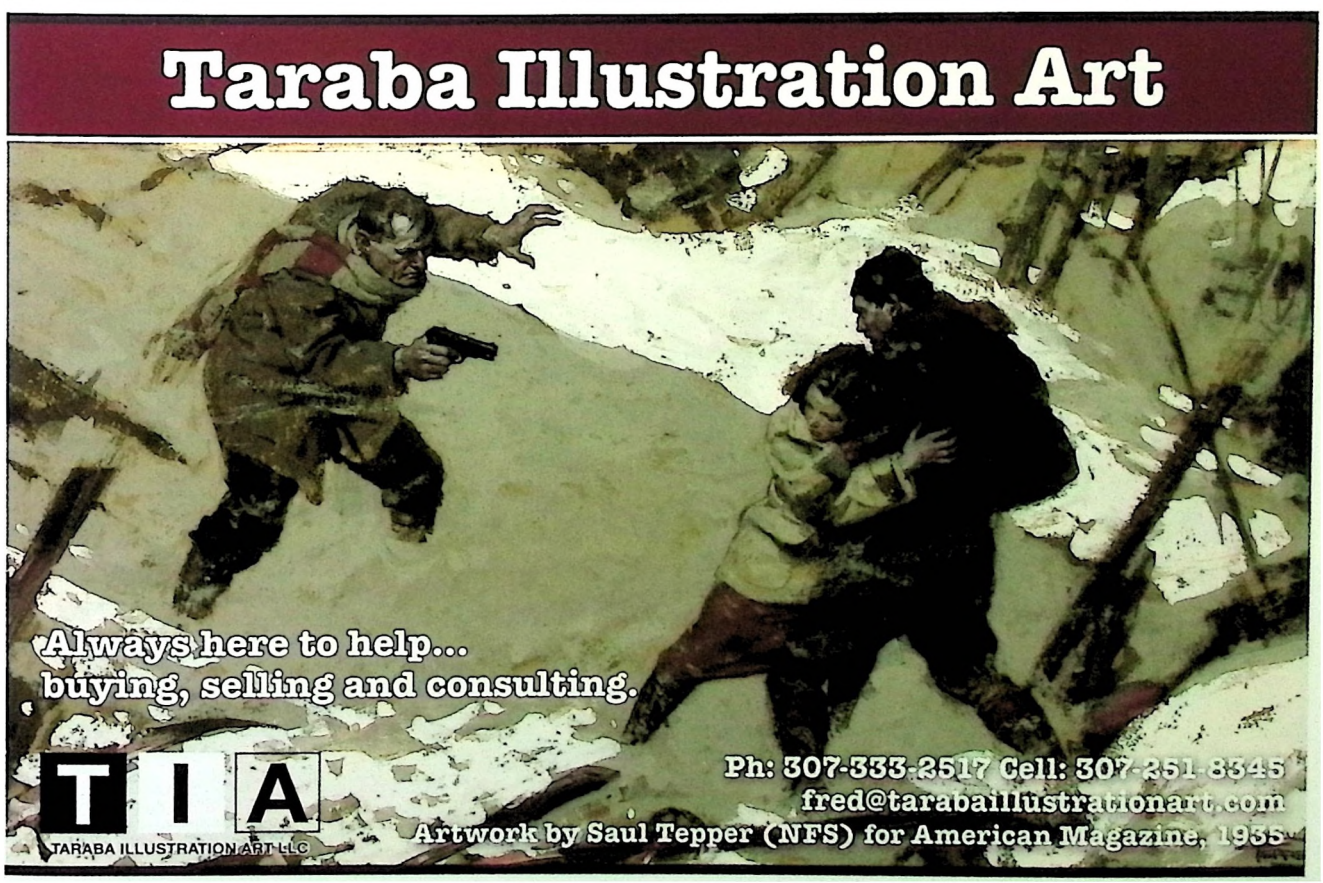
THE FINAL PAINTING

Tepper usually worked in oil on canvas. He worked large, at least 36 x 24 inches or more, as he found it easier to paint people's heads on a larger canvas. The time from the approval of the comprehensive sketch to the completed oil illustration was usually about a week.

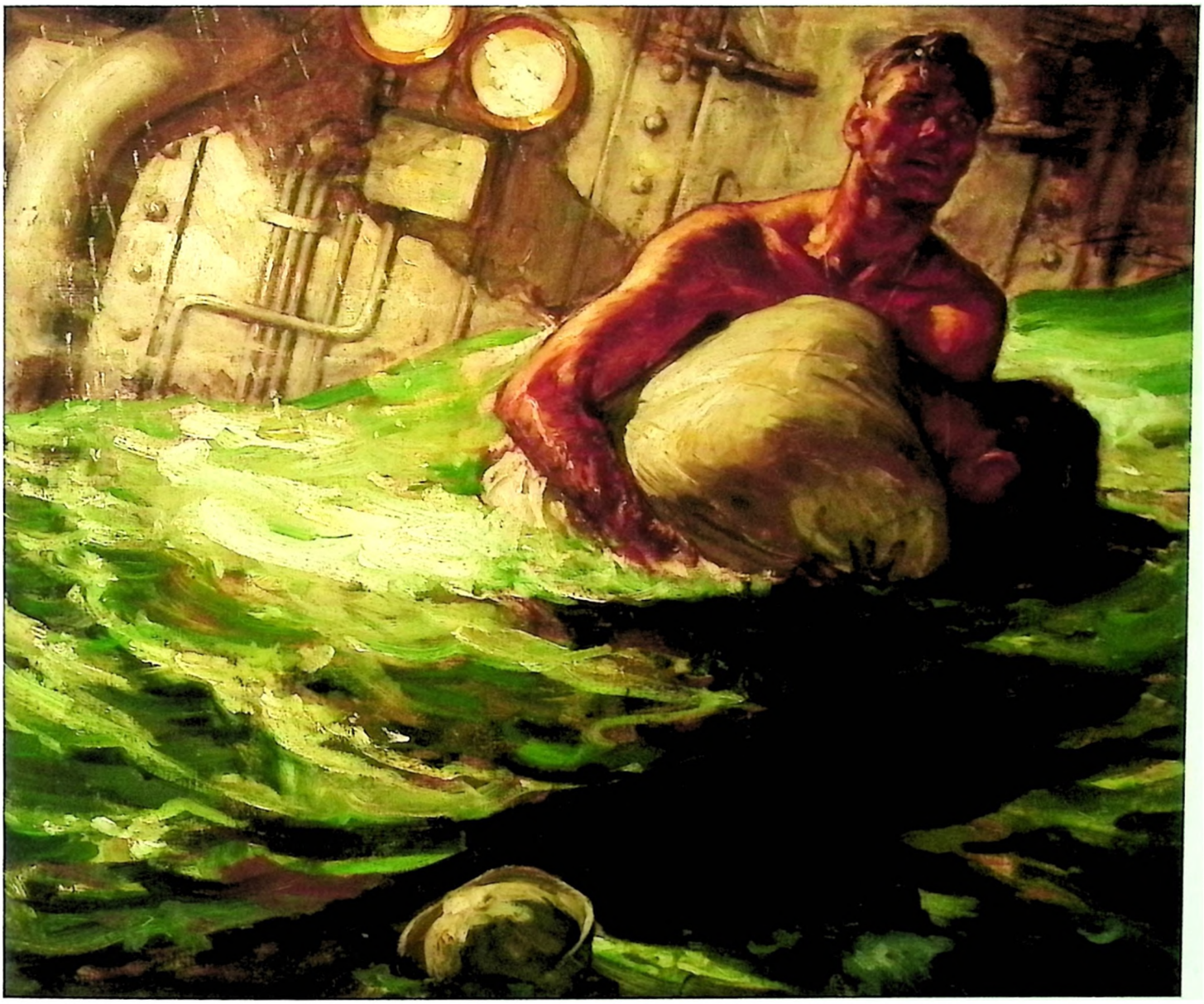
When starting a painting, Tepper began with an undertone sympathetic to the overall mood he was trying to achieve in his final image. When this layer was dry, he would transfer his sketch to the canvas, outlining major areas of the composition first, and then roughing in the other background elements. At this point, he brought his models back into the studio for some final detail work, working back into the sketchy areas to complete the painting. He often made minor changes to reflect subtleties that only came to light when painting directly from the live model.

Rather than using a linear approach, Tepper painted his pictures with fluid strokes of paint arranged into a strong pattern of lights and rich darks. He worked traditionally, applying his paints "fat over lean." Dark areas were painted thinly, while the light areas were covered with layers of impasto.

Tepper also worked in gouache, utilizing a similar method to his routine in oils. As the water-based medium dried almost instantly, he could work very fast. If changes were necessary, he could easily work over areas of the painting without waiting for anything to dry.



Poster illustration. 1940s. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY



"Loose Lips Sink Ships." Advertising illustration for Stetson Hats, 1944. Oil on canvas, 28" x 33". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Independent of his medium or concept, the most important ingredient to Tepper's success was his complete dedication to the work at hand. He threw himself completely into each commission, and his immense technical skill gave him the ability to paint in bold strokes or to utilize a more delicate touch, as the subject would command.

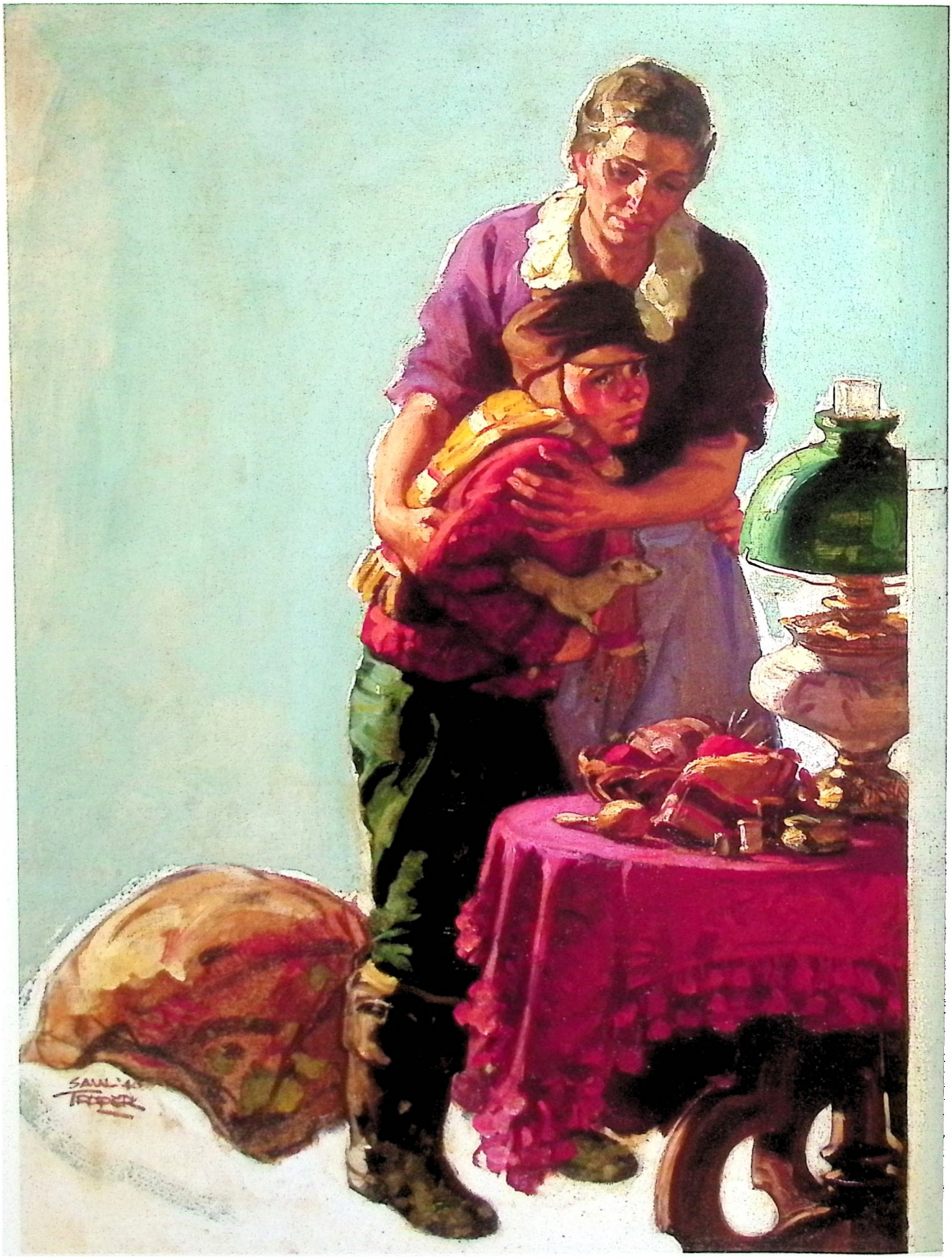
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Having grown up during the Golden Age of American Illustration, Tepper was completely influenced by the artists of the period. The years between World War I and II were Saul's own "Golden Age," an era of romance and adventure in which he, Dean Cornwell, and Norman Rockwell played an important role. Reproduced in the major magazines for four decades, Saul's work became a source of inspiration for many other contemporary artists.

During Tepper's most prolific period, he employed apprentices to help in the research necessary for his paintings. Al Dorne apprenticed to Saul at his first lettering studio, and later Harry Beckoff, Harvey Kidder, Mason Combs, Ardis Hughes, and others worked for him in various capacities. He tells about one young man, Arthur DeKuh, an ex-boxer and bathhouse bouncer, who, through hard work and Saul's critiques, established a career in art.

Illustrator Mason Combs recalled how Tepper touched the lives of everyone who came in contact with him: "Years after I apprenticed for him, Saul told me of sitting in a cafe shortly before one of the lumberjack pictures' deadlines. In the cafe was a man of the proper features, sitting alone. Saul approached him, explained the situation and presented his card, telling the potential model to be at the studio at 10:00 the next morning. The man took the card without conversation. The next morning he appeared, posed, and before leaving asked when the illustration would appear.

"A week after the issue hit the newsstands, the man reappeared at the studio. He told Saul that he had been sitting in the cafe, having decided to put the .38 he carried to his head and end it all. He had left his wife and family in his hometown



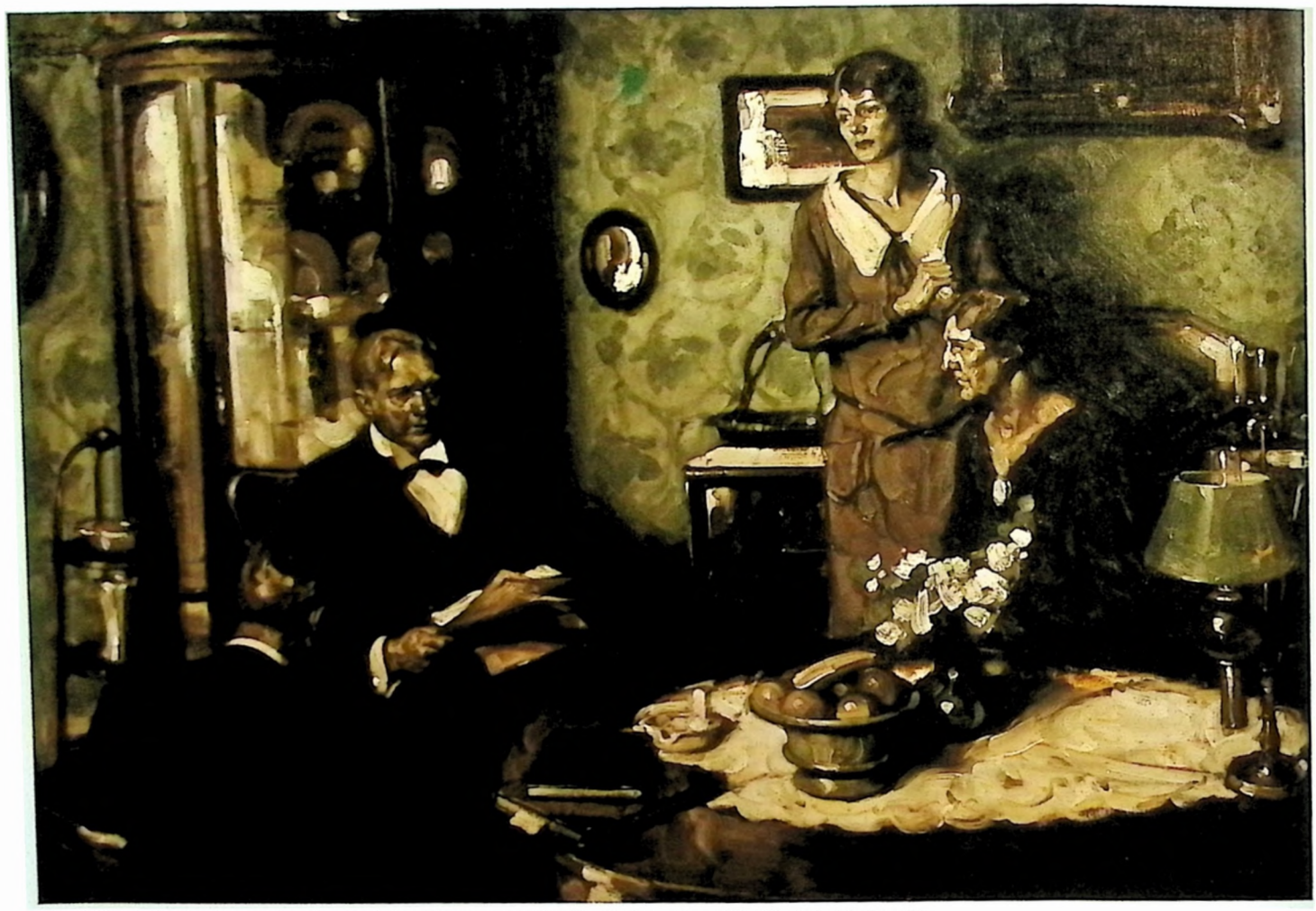
Editorial illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post*, September 1941. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Editorial illustration for the *McCall's*, 1942. Oil on canvas, 22" x 39". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

Editorial illustration, 1940s. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

***Dixie*. Charcoal on paper, 7.5" x 6.5". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com**

Editorial Illustration, 1925. Oil on canvas, 36" x 31". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com



Editorial illustration for *Cosmopolitan*, October 1929. Oil on canvas, 28" x 40". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

upstate, lost his job, and been on a binge when Saul arrived on the scene. Once the *Post* illustration came out, everyone in the man's hometown recognized him; his job was offered back, he was reunited with his family, and he became a town celebrity. Yes, Tepper touched many people's lives."

A TURN TO OTHER THINGS

With the start of World War II, the market for Tepper's style of illustration began to fall out of favor. Magazines focused less on a painterly approach, and began to utilize more photography. Rather than dwell on the past, Saul turned to other pursuits.

A multifaceted talent, he branched out into photography, music, and teaching. Tepper claimed to be the "first illustrator to successfully illustrate fiction in color photography, that had the same personality and look of [his] own illustrations." Saul had a strong love of music which led to many published songs and resulted in a membership in ASCAP in 1941. He wrote sketches, lyrics, and music for 15 of the popular "Illustrators Shows," produced by the Society of Illustrators. The Illustrators Barbershop Quartet, with Saul as baritone, was a highlight of those productions. Over the years, Saul's music was recorded by Nat "King" Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, Glenn Miller, Ezio Pinza, Harry James, and many others.

In the 1950s, still an active artist for the new adventure magazines (*True*, *Argosy*, and *Real*), Saul reached a point of dissatisfaction. He quit illustration and became an art director for television, working for J. Walter Thompson and BBD&O, where his ability to draw and to compose were well-suited and could provide his livelihood. He also continued with his music, composing the Red Cross theme song for 1960-1961. Saul also began refurbishing and relining his old canvases, and he invented tools for the process.

Tepper approached everything he did with an intensity and concentration that were the hallmarks of his illustration career. Bill Purdom, a friend during Tepper's last years, remembers him as an inspiring teacher. "He had a fiery passion for life and a gift for passing that enthusiasm to all who knew him."

In Tepper's final years, the cycle was swinging back in his direction; collectors were rediscovering his work and paying good prices for his pictures at auction. The New York Society of Illustrators honored him with a retrospective show, fortunately timed while Saul was still able to be at the opening.

It must have been heartening to Saul to be at the center of a group of new admirers, people who were too young to have seen his work in print but who were greatly impressed by the strength and emotional impact of his paintings. He had perfect recall of his whole career. He could name the place, date, title and publication of all the stories he had illustrated. He remembered who the models were, the eccentricities of the art

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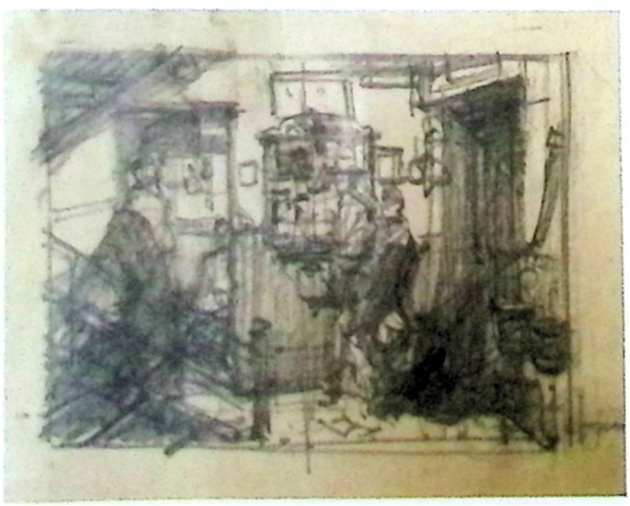
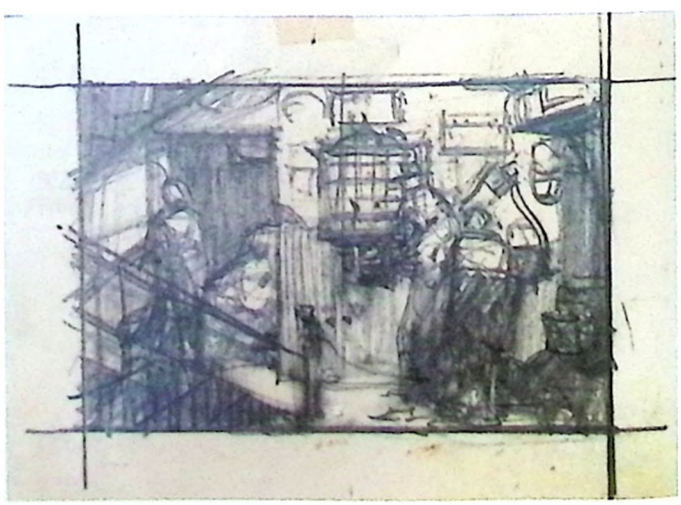
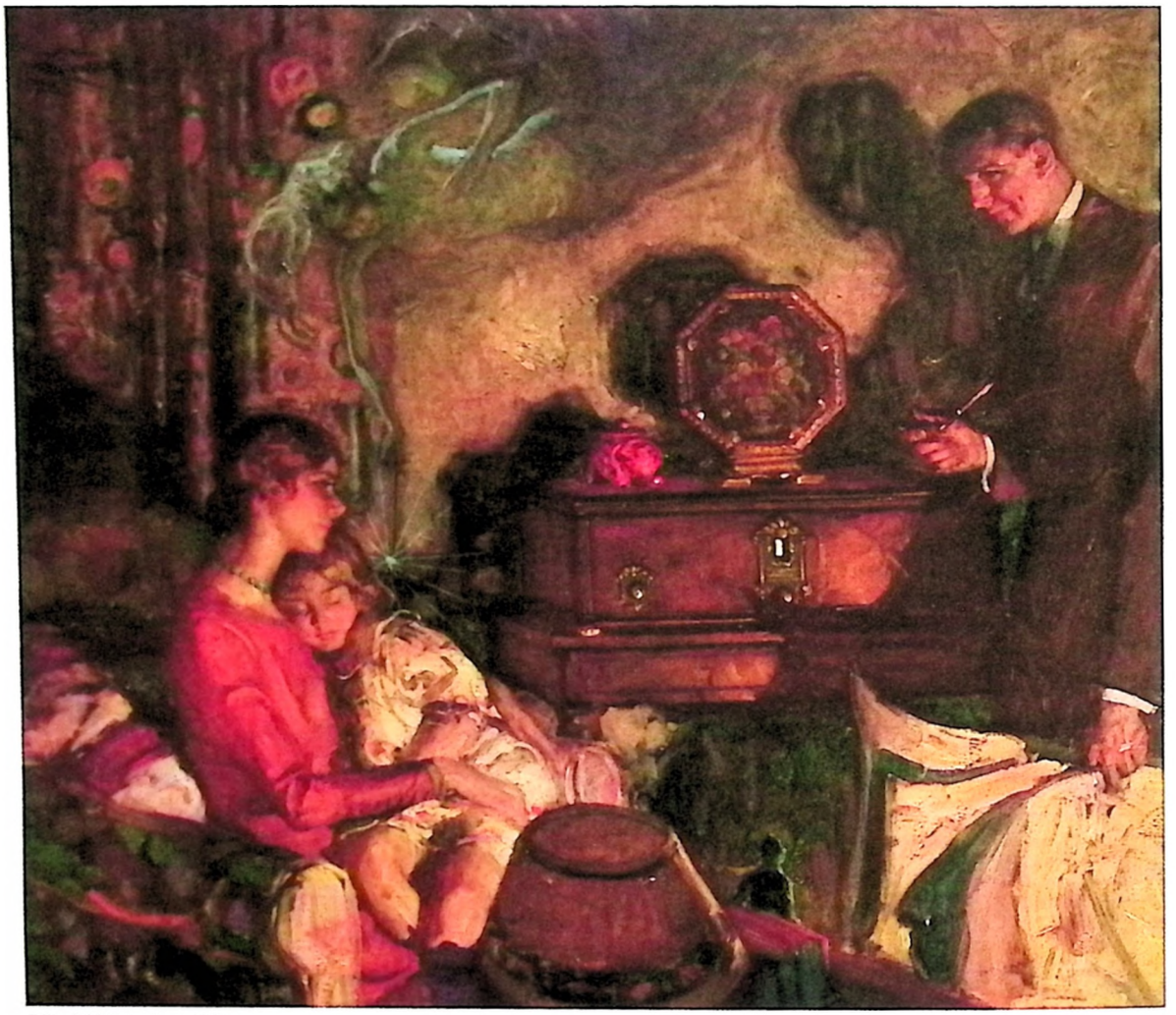
Editorial illustration for *American Magazine*, September 1933. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of The Museum of American Illustration at The Society of Illustrators, NY





ABOVE: Compositional sketchs for *American Magazine* illustration, 1933. Graphite on paper. Photos courtesy of David Saunders

Editorial Illustration, 1940. Oil on canvas laid on panel, 24" x 24.75". Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA

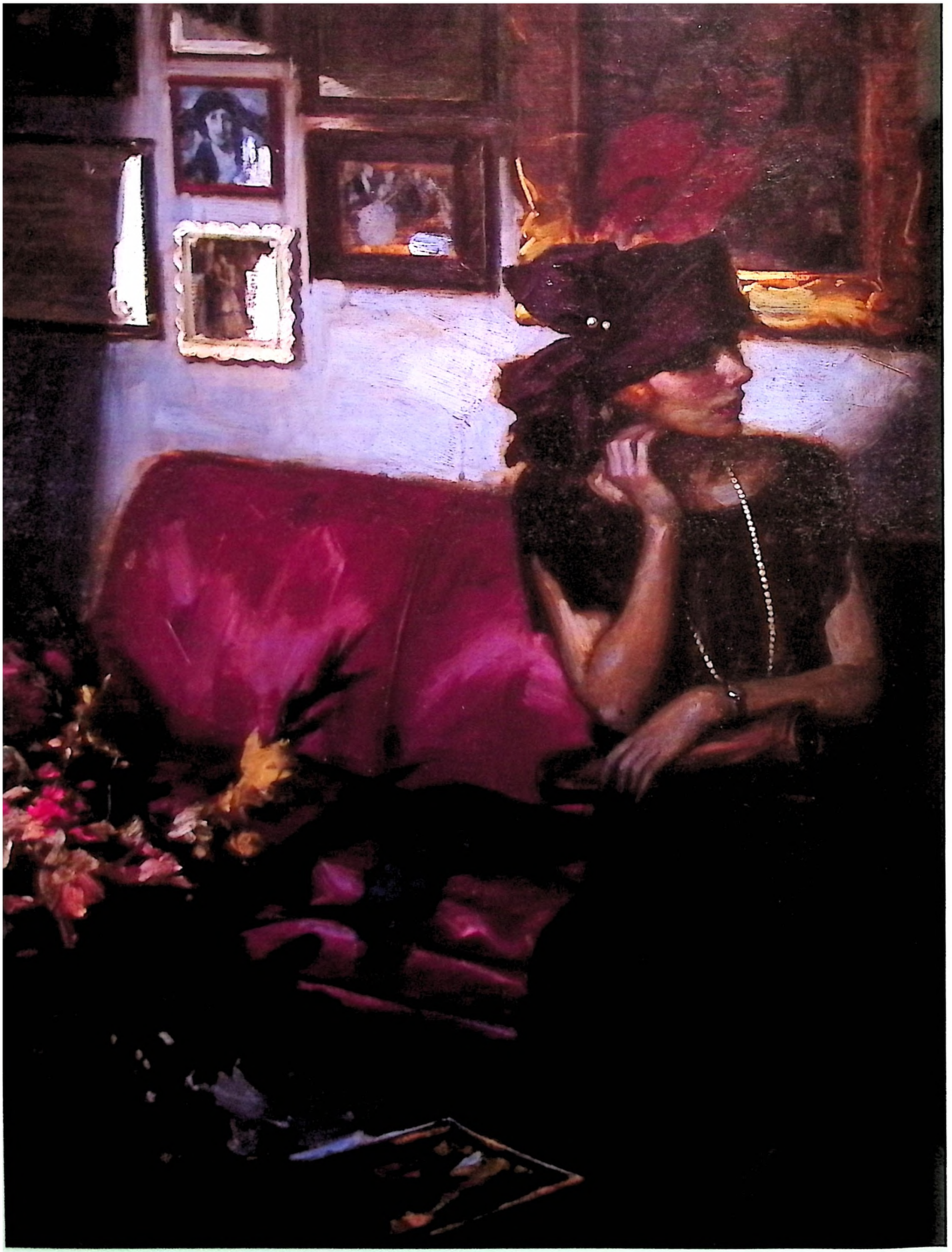


Editorial Illustration, 1930s

Editorial Illustration. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Editorial illustration for *American Magazine*, July 1933. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Editorial illustration. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of The Illustrated Gallery, PA



Advertising illustration for Magnavox, 1940s. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Editorial Illustration. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Editorial illustration for *American Magazine*, May 1935. Gouache on board. Photo courtesy of Taraba Illustration Art, WY

Editorial illustration for *American Magazine*, September 1932. Oil on canvas, 34" x 38.25".
Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Editorial illustration for *Collier's*, July 7, 1951. Oil on board, 12" x 12". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Editorial Illustration for *Pictorial Review*, December 1937. Gouache on board, 22.25" x 19.5". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Editorial Illustration. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Saul Tepper in the studio

directors, problems with engravers, where he found the props, and the deadlines he had to meet. He also had many stories to tell about his fellow illustrators and of his involvement in the annual theatrical performances at the Society of Illustrators, for which he wrote skits and music. Saul already knew his time was running out, but he was certain that some of those admiring young illustrators would absorb his message and carry it on in their own way.

Most of all he liked to remember "Mr." Dunn. No one who studied with him ever had the temerity to speak to him familiarly as "Harvey" or to consider themselves his equal.

Saul recalled Mr. Dunn's words as recorded in "An Evening in the Classroom", notes taken in one of Dunn's painting classes and printed at the suggestion of Mario Cooper in 1934: "Art is a universal language and it is so because it is the expression of the feelings of man. Any man can look at a true work of art and feel kin to it and with he who made it—for he has the same number of heart beats a minute, comes into the world to face the same joys, sorrows, and anticipations, the same hopes and fears. A vastly different vision may arise in the consciousness at the mention of a word, but our feelings are the same. By this you may know that the Brotherhood of Man, is."

Saul Tepper passed away in January, 1987.

—by Daniel Zimmer, 2017

Much of the information in this article was drawn from the book *Masters of American Illustration: 41 Illustrators and How They Worked* by Fred Taraba, available from The Illustrated Press, www.theillustratedpress.com.

Editorial Illustration

field guide to Wild American

PULP ARTISTS

AN ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF

PULP ARTISTS

FROM A - TO - Z

Anderson - to - Drake
Dreany - to - Kinstler
Kohn - to - Ross
Rozen - to - Zirm

AND PULP PUBLISHING PERSONNEL

Ace - to - Ziff

Our website features biographical profiles on the artists that worked for the pulps. Each bio page includes a photograph, a signature, and a sampling of chronological images to review evolving styles.

The Life Stories of Your Favorite Illustrators

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field guide to Wild American

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William Faulkner, James Avati, AND THE ART OF THE Paperback Novel

by M. Thomas Inge

Conventional critical opinion has it that by 1945, William Faulkner's career was in a slump, with all of his books out of print except for *Sanctuary*, sustained by its notoriety rather than respect. At least this was the opinion of critic Malcolm Cowley, who I have always suspected checked only the bookstores in Manhattan. At any rate, he set out to restore Faulkner to his major league standing by organizing *The Portable Faulkner*, published by Viking Press on April 29, 1946. What that book did accomplish was to clarify for general reader and critic alike a sense of the chronology and the interconnected nature of the grand historical fiction Faulkner had been developing in nearly all of his work, the epic of Yoknapatawpha County.

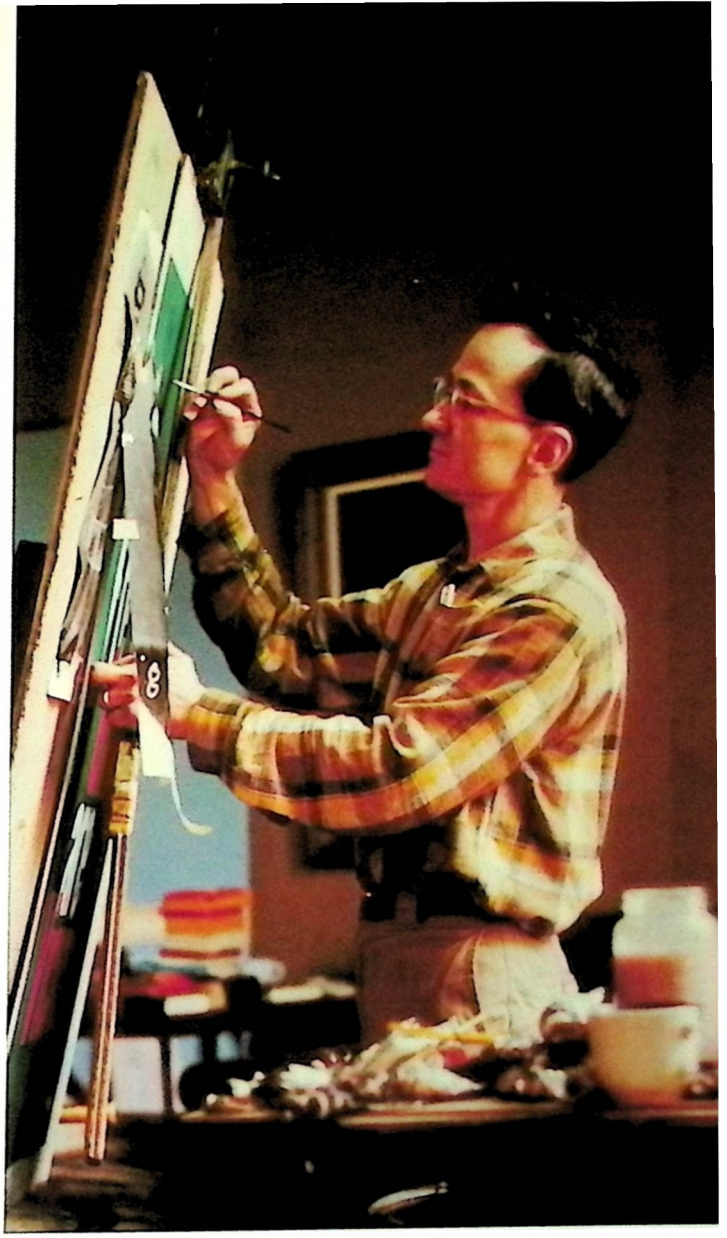
It had been four years since Faulkner himself had produced a new book, but he had occupied his time earning a living by trying to prove his worth as a screenwriter in Hollywood. It would be two more years before the next novel was published. He began writing it in January of 1948 using an idea he first had in 1940 for a murder mystery in which a black man, about to be lynched, solves the crime which he did not commit without even leaving his jail cell. Completing the manuscript in only four months, Faulkner published it as *Intruder in the Dust* on September 27, 1948, and experienced the kind of popular and critical acclaim he had seldom known. Addressing head on racial problems in the South, at least six years before the Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the novel's liberal bias brought both praise and condemnation from political factions, but few denied the power and appeal of it as a work of fiction. More importantly for the author personally, it brought his checkbook back into balance with a sale of 15,000 copies in the trade edition and, even before publication, the purchase of the film rights by MGM Studios for $50,000.

Which brings us to another less discussed but significant chapter in the development of Faulkner's reputation as a world-class author, paradoxically the purchase of *Intruder in the Dust* by New American Library in 1949 for an inexpensive paperback edition. The paperback has frequently been considered the bastard child of American publishing. Writers lusted after the additional income it brought but not the low opinion often held by the literary establishment. Hard cover was considered the only respectable form of publication, and one yielded to the temptation of a paperback reprint only when hard times and decreasing sales drove one there. Book reviewers scorned even new works in the format until the last part of the 20th century. But the New American Library had worked hard to establish a reputation as the most prestigious of the paperback crowd.

Paperbacks have always been with us since the invention of movable type because of itinerant scholars, moving from university to university, who needed texts in a small and inexpensive format that they could easily carry in their travel bags. But the paperbacks that we know today primarily have been the product of the 20th century because of new technology in book binding and commercial methods of mass distribution (Schick 3-4). The paperback industry became highly profitable in the United States around the time of World War II because of several influential factors as outlined by New American Library founder Victor Weybright:

1. The development of rotary-press book production in standard format, using rubber plates, and using "perfect" binding—that is, binding not sewed but glued at the spine by automatic machines, which held the cover in place as well as holding the pages together.

2. The pioneering of distribution through magazine wholesalers and non-book-shop outlets, rather than confining the marketing to a dwindling number of book shops, thus ensuring the economy of large printings and widespread distribution.



James Avati at the easel, 1956. Photo by Stanley Meltzoff

3. The cumulative effect of Armed Forces Editions, provided for American troops in World War II, which developed the habit of reading books in millions of young Americans who were normally not book readers... and with high school education almost universal. (Weybright, "Paperback Books" 850.)

Because so much of this activity fell outside the mainstream pattern of book publishing—hardcover editions, followed by periodical reviews, and sold only in well established book stores—and since the books were cheap reprints of proven sellers, they were considered a less respectable form of reading matter, especially since they appeared on newsstand and drugstore racks beside colorful pulp magazines and sensational tabloids. In fact, to compete with these more vivid and eye-catching publications, the paperback publishers were often forced to use increasingly salacious cover illustrations, which only contributed to their shady reputation.

Long before paperbacks gained a footing in American culture, Europe saw numerous successful paperbound publishing ventures, such as the "British Poets" series from John Bell in England in the late 18th century; the Tauchnitz series of British and American authors in Germany, which included over 5,000 titles between 1840 and World War II; and also from Germany, Albatross Books, which stressed contemporary authors in English, beginning in 1932. Inspired by such examples, Sir Allen Lane established Penguin Books in England in 1935, and set about bringing both sophistication and profitability to this type of publication. His intention, he said, was "first to select books that were both first-rate entertainment and also really good quality, to build up a really representative list of good modern literature; secondly to keep the standard consistently high, so that Penguin should, in time, stand as a hall-mark of excellence" (qtd. in Schick 13-14). Lane's phenomenal success made Penguin into one of the most respected publishers in general, a reputation that has lasted until today, and led to the establishment of subsidiary companies in Canada, Australia, and the United States.

The United States office opened in July of 1939, and was first entrusted to Ian Ballantine, an ambitious man who soon left and eventually in 1952 would establish his own firm of Ballantine Books and become a major competitor to Penguin. The German-born Kurt Enoch, who had helped found and manage Albatross Books in Hamburg, assumed control as president, and a former diplomat to the London U. S. Embassy and friend of Lane's, Victor Weybright, became chairman and editor in chief. This successful collaboration soon saw the publication of works by such authors as George Bernard Shaw, E.M. Forster, and D.H. Lawrence from England, and from America John Dos Passos, Sherwood Anderson, and Carson McCullers. Genuine popular and commercial success came, however, with the publication of Erskine Caldwell's *God's Little Acre* in 1946, which would eventually sell over 50 million copies in successive reprints and make him, according to Weybright, "the world's bestselling writer" (qtd. in Schick 197).

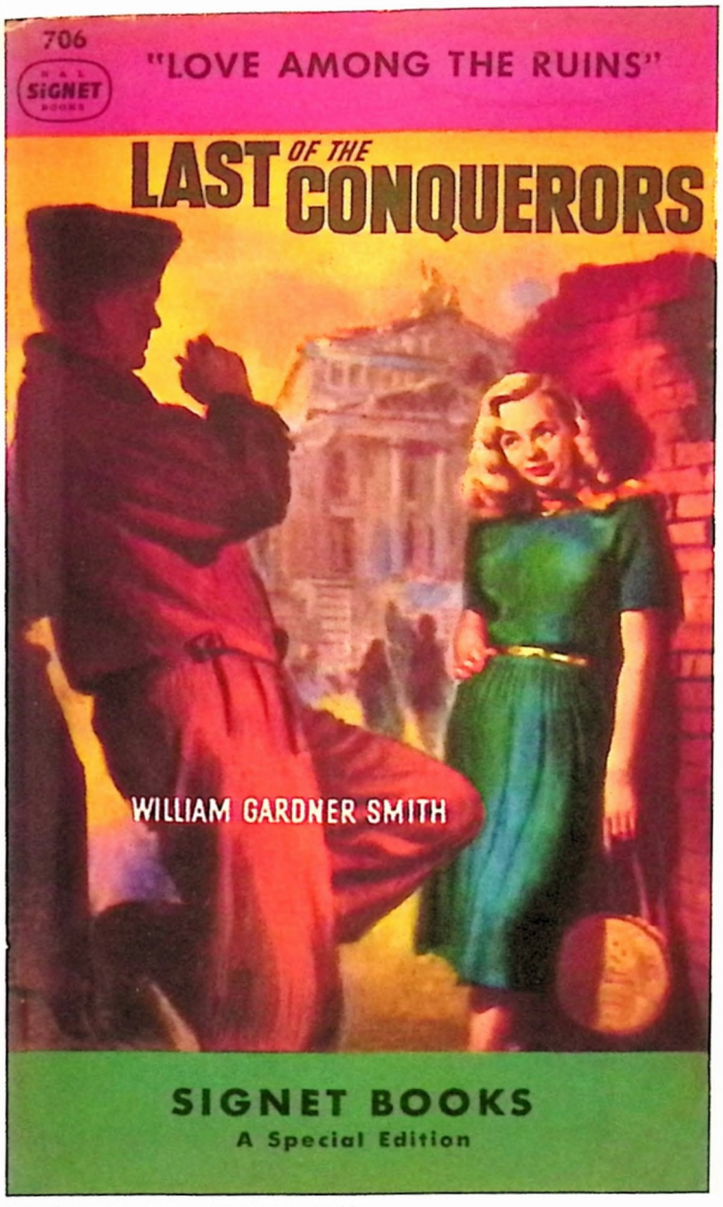
Because of developing differences in editorial opinion and practices with the parent company, in 1947 Enoch and Weybright negotiated the purchase of the company as an independent corporation and renamed the firm The New American Library of World Literature. They established two new imprint series, Penguin Books becoming "Signet Books," to be devoted to serious contemporary works of fiction, and the Pelican series becoming "Mentor Books," to feature chiefly non-fiction and literary classics for the college trade. While Caldwell, Mickey Spillane, and Ian Fleming would be their bestselling writers, setting sales records not matched for a long time, other notable additions to their list were James T. Farrell, John Steinbeck, Jack Kerouac, J.D. Salinger, Truman Capote, William Styron, Norman Mailer, and Flannery O'Connor. Maintaining a strong interest in black writers, they reprinted works by Richard Wright, Willard Motley, Ann Petry, James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison. Although such writers as Caldwell and Spillane had less than respectable literary reputations and were often labeled as pornographers and subjected to censorship, Weybright understood that the sales of their works enabled him to take economic chances on other worthwhile authors. He saw his challenge as achieving a delicate balance between what he called "heavy traffic" and "high culture" (qtd. in Bonn 3).

It was to be expected that Weybright, already a good friend of Bennett Cerf at Random House, would want to add Faulkner to his list, and the perfect opportunity came in 1948 with the critical attention and publicity attendant to the book and movie versions of *Intruder in the Dust*. Not only did it offer strong commercial potential, but the novel dealt with themes already dear to Weybright's heart, as already demonstrated by his promotion of African American authors, that is racism and the racial dilemma in the United States. This would not be Faulkner's first appearance in paperback. While the firm was still an arm of Penguin Books, Weybright had seen to the publication of *The Wild Palms* and *Sanctuary* in Penguin editions, and when Avon Books had begun operations in 1941, among the first 12 titles issued was a reprint of *Mosquitoes* (Schreuders, *Paperbacks* 188). Faulkner's more difficult and complex works, however, were not finding their way onto paperback lists.

Faulkner himself probably saw the paperback as one more concession on his part to the economic necessity of earning a living. When he mentioned such publications in his fiction, they were seen as a part of the general degeneration of the times. In *Sartoris*, for example, Dr. Peabody reads an unhealthy diet of "lurid, paper-covered nickel novels," while Aunt Jenny Du Pre prefers salacious tabloids filled with "accounts of arson and murder and violent dissolutions and adultery" (Faulkner 95, 48). Before Joe Christmas, in *Light in August*, goes off to murder and decapitate Joanna Burden in her bedroom, he fortifies himself by reading from cover to cover a pulp fiction publication which "was of the type whose covers bear either pictures of young women in underclothes or pictures of men in the act of shooting one another with pistols" (Faulkner 102-3). In *The Sound and the Fury*, the Yoknapatawpha County librarian keeps high school students from reading the sexually suggestive popular fiction of the time by locking up paperback copies of *Forever Amber* by Kathleen Winsor, *Jurgen* by James Branch Cabell, and the *Topper* novels by Thorne Smith (Faulkner 413-14). Since he regularly borrowed and read paperback books from the lending library in the Gathright-Reed Drugstore on the Square in Oxford, none of these may reflect on Faulkner's actual opinion of paperbacks. He did seem to be aware of the art on the covers of the more sensational titles, as indicated by his less than flattering descriptions recorded above. And he was certainly not above writing and placing his own detective stories in the popular press, six of which he gathered in *Knight's Gambit* and one of which won the second prize in a mystery story magazine contest. Among other things, *Intruder in the Dust* is itself a detective novel, except the alleged murderer and the detective are one and the same and the crime is solved from behind jail bars, a variation on the classic locked room dilemma in such fiction.

Weybright knew too that Faulkner would add not only prestige but profit to his operation. In February of 1948, while still with Penguin Books, he reported to Random House, "We are very pleased with Faulkner's reception by the mass audience. *Sanctuary* is doing a good, steady, perennial business with 148,000 copies sold in the six-month royalty period ending December 31 [1947]. The more spontaneous reception of *The Wild Palms* has already resulted in two modest reprintings of 50,000 each of *Sanctuary* in 1948, and we have every hope that this momentum will continue" (qtd. in Bonn 120-21). Twice he would go to bat for Faulkner when the author was accused of racism and indecency. Before he began New American Library, when the Penguin *Sanctuary* was cited as racist by a distributor in 1947, he strongly responded, "I can't believe that you have read *Sanctuary*... You, and any wholesaler whose attention you call to the allegedly offensive passage in *Sanctuary*, should know that Faulkner, like Caldwell, writes about the South with biting realism, and in so doing reveals the degradation and bigotry which thrive on ignorance in the backward areas, which, alas, have not yet enjoyed all the advantages of education and tolerance" (qtd. in Bonn 138-39). Less than a year later, however, he did yield to further pressure from distributors who faced canceled orders by over 20 cities by replacing two words with dashes in the text of *The Wild Palms*, but not before lecturing them in a letter about the "literary quality and importance" of Faulkner's work and the impossibility of writing about the modern world without dealing with "human relations in which sex has been a motivating force." Weybright might well have been defending the cover art for many of his novels too when he added, "No one can deny that sex is one of the most interesting subjects in the world" (qtd. in Bonn 139-42).

It was a fortunate circumstance that in March 1949, Weybright and Enoch had just begun to employ the talent of a freelance artist named James Avati, who would change the entire face and style of paperback cover paintings. If anything, Avati had more deeply felt principles about the evils of racism than the publisher. In fact, this led into a minor conflict on his first

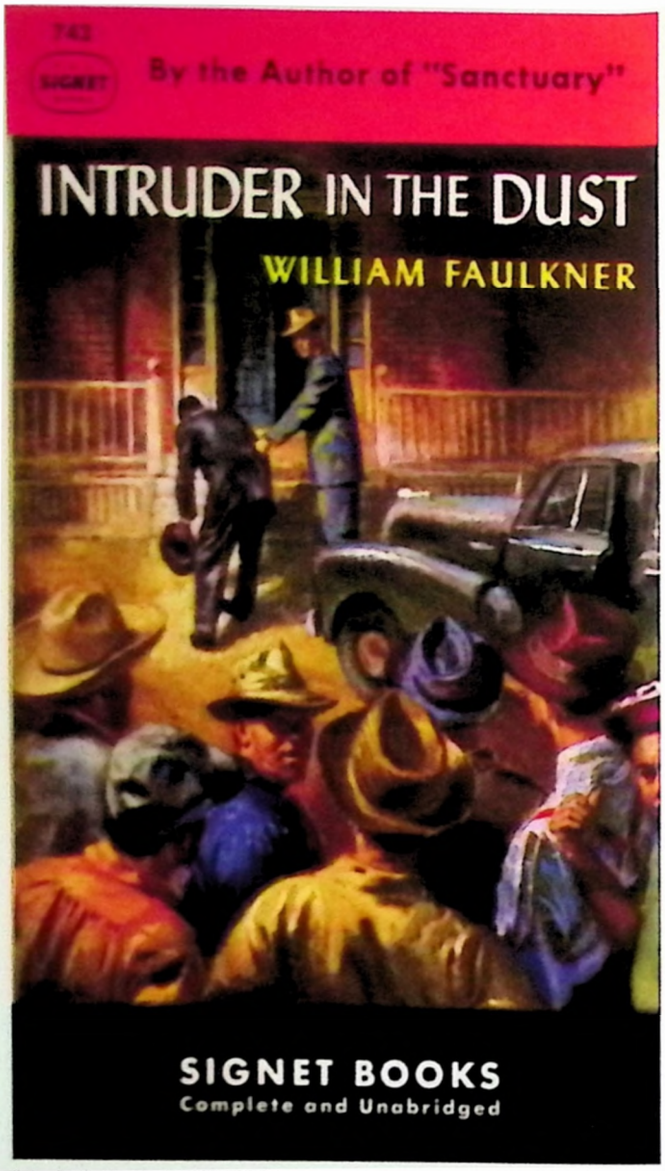


Last of the Conquerors, SIGNET 706, 1949

The Other Room, BANTAM 463, 1949. Photo courtesy of Michael Sellard

Signet assignment, a cover for the post-war novel by black writer William Gardner Smith, *The Last of the Conquerors*. It portrayed a couple flirting amidst the bombed ruins of a German city. The girl is blonde and white, but the soldier standing in the shadows should have been black. Avati's original sketches made this clear, but the publishers were hesitant to transgress public sensibility. As Avati later reported, "Everybody agonized over this. Bookstores wouldn't handle a cover showing a black man with a white woman. Obviously, it was a GI, but you didn't see that he was black, and I didn't even use a Negro as a model. It was a compromise" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 26). Thus the racial identity of the soldier was visually obscured. Interestingly enough, Avati's very first paperback painting in January 1949 was the cover for a Bantam edition of *The Other Room* by Wirth Tuttle Hedden with a similar racially charged situation. In this case Avati painted what is clearly a black man confronting a white Southern woman, inevitably blonde of course. It did not seem to hurt this book, since Bantam sold a million copies in a few weeks.

Avati's sixth assignment for Signet in June 1949 was the most controversial novel about race relations of the 1940s, Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit*, about a love affair between a black woman and a white man, which leads to a brutal lynching. The title was borrowed from Billie Holliday's well-known 1939 version of the blues song *Strange Fruit*, which referred to the bodies strung on trees after a lynching. Even here, in the cover painting, the woman's features as painted by Avati do not necessarily infer any one racial identity. When he received his next assignment for his 15th Signet cover to appear in September, 1949, Avati may have been relieved to learn that despite its racial theme, there would be no need to obscure anyone. Except for the elderly Eunice Habersham, all the other women in *Intruder in the Dust* were minor background characters, and none of them were nubile blondes confronted by virile black men. Instead Avati created a powerful dramatic scene symbolically reflective of the central conflict of the novel, the word of an elderly black man against the prejudice of the larger white community.



***Intruder In the Dust*, SIGNET 743**

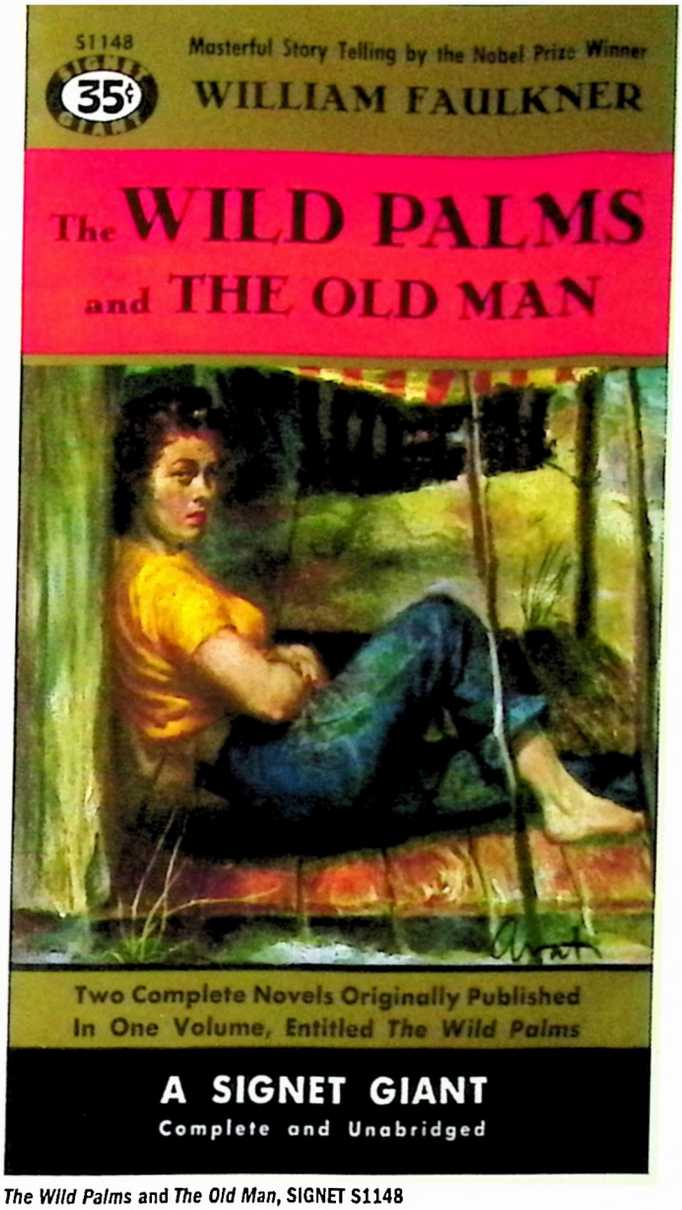
Avati selected the scene from the novel when Lucas Beauchamp is being escorted into the jail house by the sheriff. The door of the car has been hastily left open while the sheriff hurries Lucas to the relative safety of a jail cell. A crowd of white men in the foreground, working class farmers, have already gathered to begin a discussion of whether a lynching is an appropriate response to the alleged murder of a white man by a black. Lucas' hat has tumbled from his head and he has picked it up. The proud and independent black is temporarily bowed by the indignity of the charge and arrest which have questioned his integrity as an upstanding member of the community. It is this indignity and embarrassment that will drive him to clear his good name by cleverly using from his cell the good graces of an attorney, Gavin Stevens; his young nephew, Chick Mallison; Chick's black friend, Aleck Sander; and a spunky, elderly spinster, Miss Habersham; as unlikely a group of amateur detectives as can be found in American literature. The basic prejudice that has caused the misunderstanding is the focus of Avati's painting, which like so much of his work to follow finds a key emotional and symbolic scene through which to capture the thematic essence of the novel, and at the same time the interest of the reader. In his first year's work of 22 covers for Signet, and another four for Bantam Books, the artist seems to have discovered the full potential of his talent almost without training or intention.

James Sante Avati was born December 14, 1912, in Bloomfield, New Jersey, the son of a portrait photographer. Both of his parents died young, so he was raised mainly by relatives. He fell in love with painting at age 13, and a wealthy uncle sponsored his education, first at Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania and then at Princeton University. He majored in architecture and minored in art and archeology at Princeton and graduated in 1935 at the height of the Depression, when no jobs were to be found. He began doing freelance work in design and promotion when he met a young woman whose parents were both successful commercial artists. They took him into the family where he learned a good deal about painting and the commercial possibilities of art. He ultimately married the young lady and worked at a variety of jobs, designing decorative tiles, drawing fashion accessories, and creating window displays for department stores in New York. Then in November of 1942, he was drafted into the Army.

Trained as a technician in radio operations, he served in France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany, and saw action at the Battle of the Bulge. Carrying a paint box with him, he sent back home small paintings, and when the war was over, he took advantage of a program that allowed him to study in a fine arts course at the Army University in luxurious Biarritz. He returned home in 1946 to settle with his family in Red Bank, New Jersey. An agent got work for him illustrating stories in several of the major popular magazines, but he did not find it satisfying, so the agent put him in touch with the publishers at Bantam Books and especially Kurt Enoch and Victor Weybright at New American Library. Almost from the start, Avati would bring a brooding sensibility and an emotionally charged realism to a form of popular art that was largely dominated by blatant sex and exploitation. As Piet Schreuders, Avati's major biographer and critic, has noted, in his hands "Paperback covers became paintings, although primarily paintings of one particular genre: dusky, sweltering scenes representing the lower reaches of the American class structure" (*Paperbacks* 107).

Avati followed a meticulous discipline in arriving at the scene he wanted to paint for each book. He always read the novel first, and before falling to sleep at night, he would ruminate about which scene best reflected its major themes: "I used to lay awake at nights thinking about covers," he said. "I used to agonize over them, trying to extract a dramatic image out of a book. I really did think hard about the story and what it meant. And then I got a hunch; it would come like an image in my head. I could see what I wanted to do. Then I would do sketches, compositional drawings, showing where the elements will be. Then I'd go to a cover meeting where editors Victor Weybright, Kurt Enoch and all the rest of them would gather, and we'd discus it" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 36). A reporter once showed up at his studio when Avati was working on a painting for the September 1954 Signet edition

James Avati at work, 1956. Photo by Stanley Meltzoff



The Wild Palms and *The Old Man*, SIGNET S1148

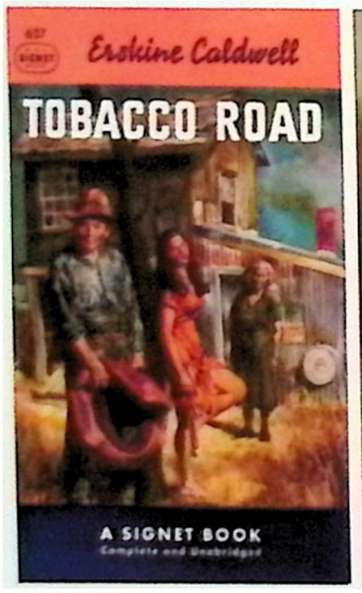
of Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* and *The Old Man*, and the artist told him, "I look for the personality that seems to dominate the book. I try to establish the mood. I look for a certain thing in the story that is especially interesting to people. The main problem is making a cover that will appeal to all levels. The paperback is reaching out to persons who are not ordinarily readers, and we have to have a cover that will excite their interest" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 48). "It always amused me," he said on another occasion, "that people will buy a book by what's on the cover. But they will" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 67, 72).

Sex would inevitably enter the picture in most cases, not because it made the book more marketable, but because it was the nature of things. Avati's typical covers depicted a couple at some moment of passion or disturbed transgression. He found that the best novels nearly always featured such a scene as a centerpiece: "It was always man-woman...One of the universals, after all, is man-woman. So, you're trying to sell a book; what does it have to do with that universal? And everybody's interested; even if you are a nun you're interested, you're just trying to suppress it, you know, and probably do a very bad job" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 31). "In essence," he once summarized, "I tried to people a mood, the mood generated by the book. Sometimes I managed to do it" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 29). Despite that modest last sentence, he accomplished it more often than not and left a body of compelling statements about most of the great and near-great literature of the 20th century.

Avati's paintings are best viewed as comments on and appreciations of the novels he illustrated. As a Dutch critic, Ed Schilders, has noted, "If we compare Avati's work with that of other artists, we see that he frequently selected a small but dramatic fragment of the story line to paint, while the others went for more general statements...It is his precise choice of subject matter, I think, that gives Avati's covers their incredible excitement. After reading the books, you realize that Avati's paintings are entirely true [to the originals]—they are painted quotations" (qtd. in Schreuders, *Paperbacks* 90). After viewing an exhibition of New American Library cover paintings in 1954, Eric Larrabee wrote for *Harper's* about Avati, "His

accomplishment is not just to reproduce the real in four colors but to frame it emotionally, in a way that defines the book inside without letting a prospective reader feel it is defined too completely to bother with" (91). Avati's close friend and fellow paperback artist Stanley Meltzoff put it concisely when he said, "Avati's pictures claim our interest in their own right without in any way diminishing the American novelists they introduced. His work is both a companion to and a commentary on the writings of our American 20th century" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 9). In other words, his visual representations elucidate and interpret the works they represent rather than mislead or simply promote.

It was a fortunate circumstance too that Avati came along just as most of the great American and world realistic fiction was finding its way into paperback editions. In the first few years of his paintings for New American Library, he illustrated books by Feodor Dostoevski, D.H. Lawrence, James T. Farrell, Richard Wright, Theodore Dreiser, Erich Maria Remarque, John O'Hara, James M. Cain, Robert Penn Warren, Ayn Rand, Tennessee Williams, William Styron, and J.D. Salinger, not to mention Erskine Caldwell for whom he would paint a record number of 49 covers. Whether Avati was tutored by his reading matter or already disposed to the bleak social-realist point of view of so many of these writers, there was a natural falling together of subject matter and perspective for him. As his friend Meltzoff best put it, Avati portrayed "sometimes the burlesqued sharecroppers in Erskine Caldwell's southland, sometimes William Faulkner's decaying southern aristocrats, sometimes Irish immigrants in the brutal slums of Chicago during the Depression years described by James T. Farrell. Here, too, are the first serious illustrations of the lives of black Americans, homosexuals and other previously ignored populations. The Avati covers do not shrink from impotence, adultery and the sadness after sex...Avati confronts the underside of everyone's experience with which great fiction deals. Tragedy, disappointment, failure, temporary victories, momentary loves, the weakness of ordinary people, the flaws in success are the bittersweet understanding of life in both the writings of American novelists and the pictures of Avati." He was at the other end of the spectrum from that other widely loved popu-



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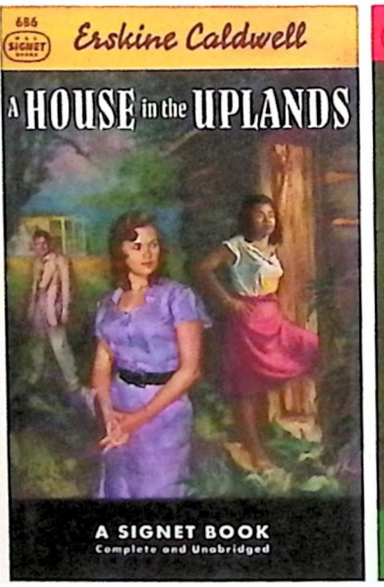

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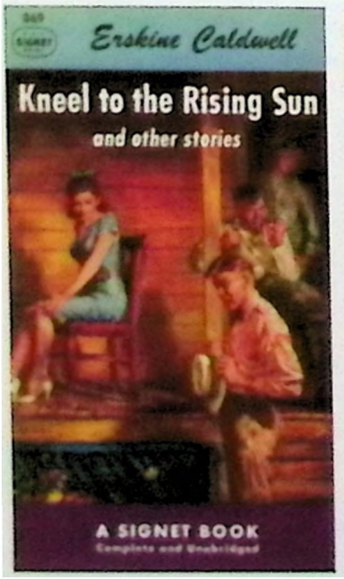

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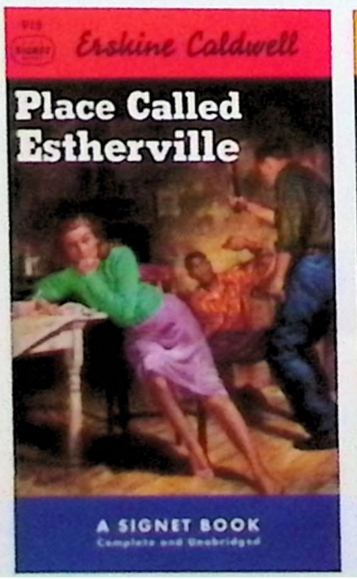

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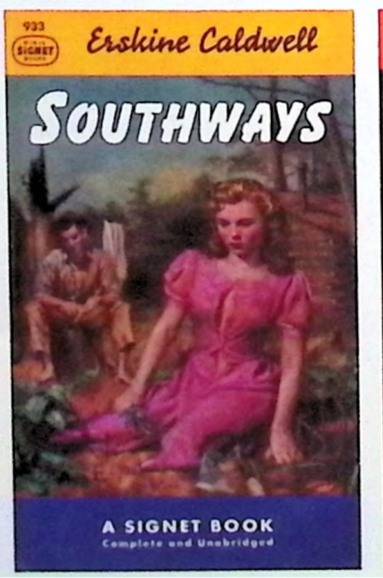

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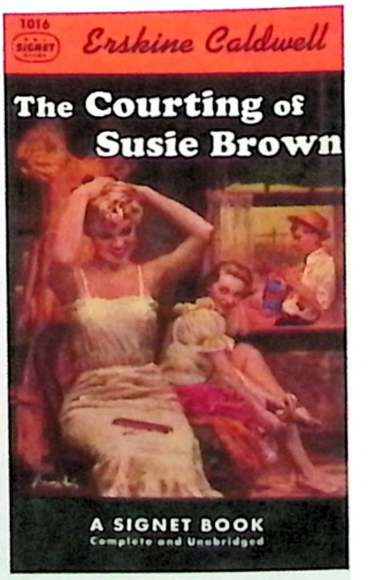

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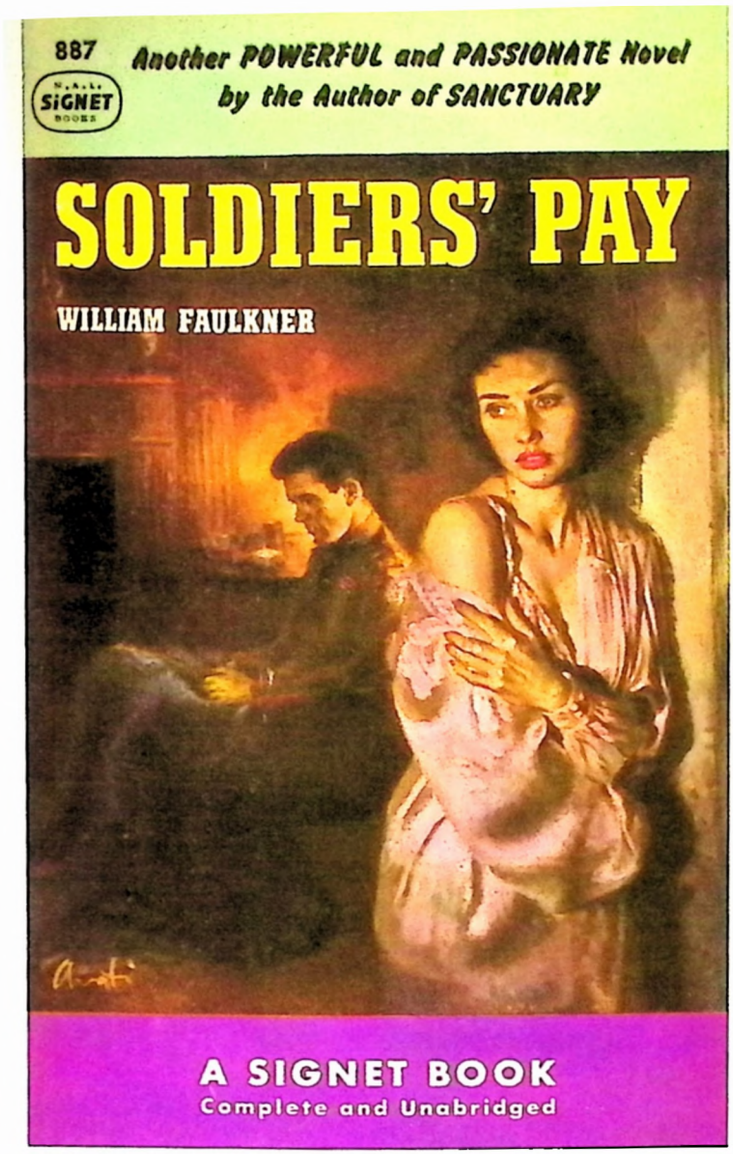
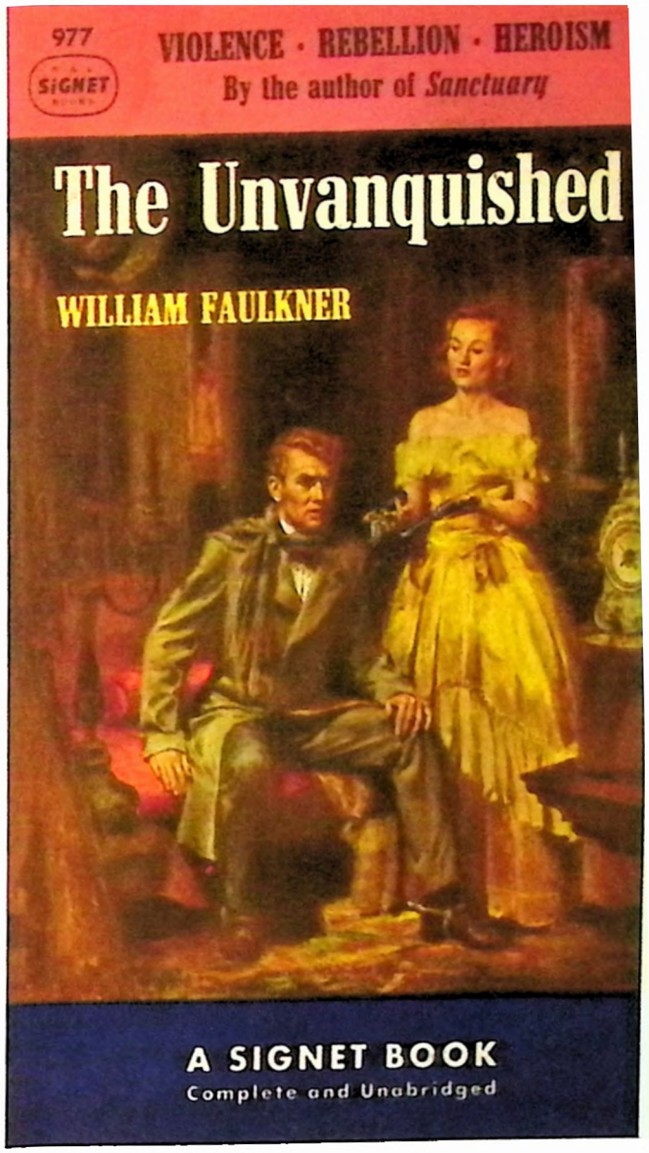


Soldier's Pay, SIGNET 887

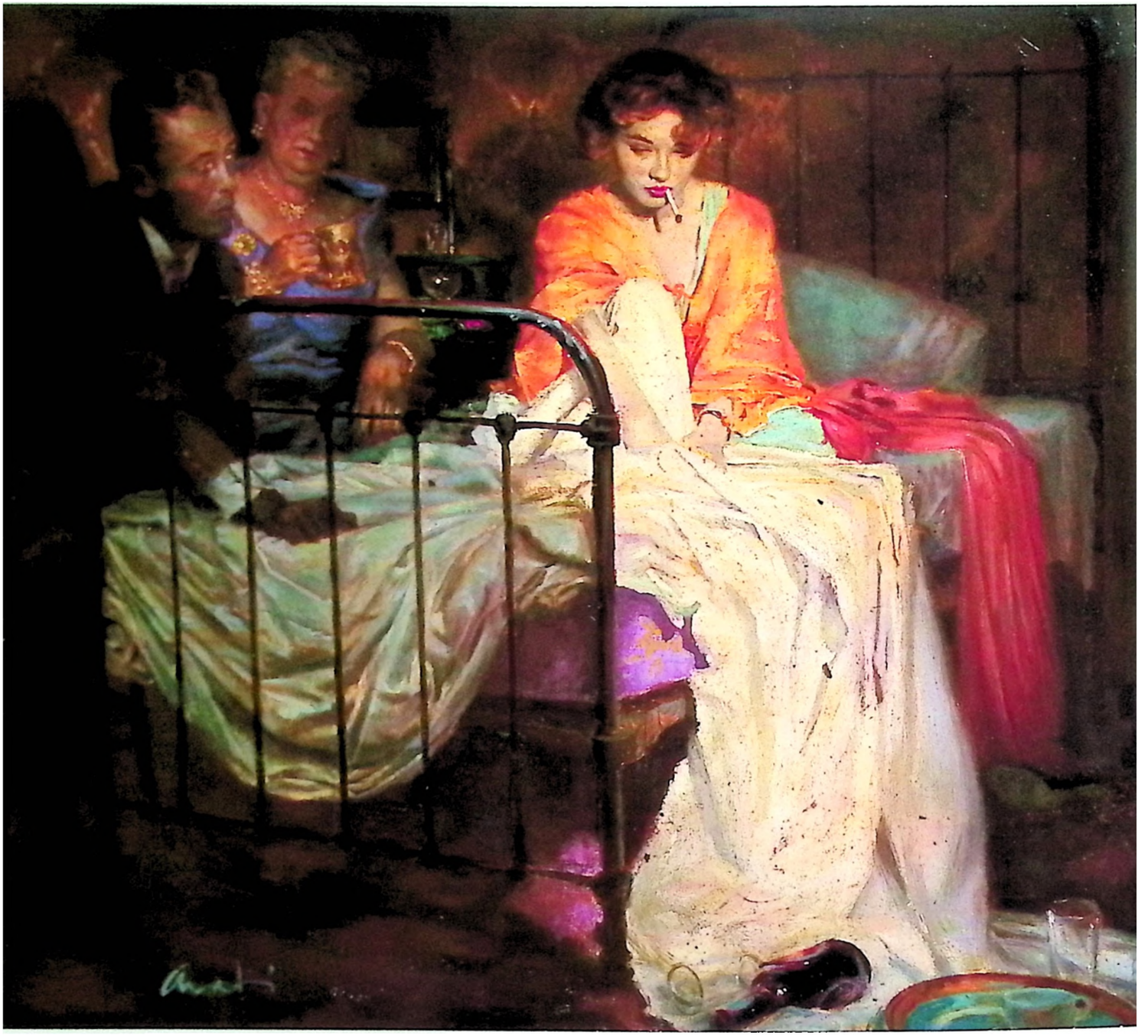


The Unvanquished, SIGNET 977

list painter of the 20th century, Norman Rockwell, who cast a sentimental romantic glow over all he painted. "We cannot imagine a Norman Rockwell character sneaking into a motel with someone else's spouse, waking up ashamed and unfulfilled," Meltzoff adds (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 8).

Faulkner, who wrote about all these things Meltzoff mentions, became one of Avati's favorite authors to read and illustrate. Following the cover for *Intruder in the Dust* (1949 Signet 743), Avati would paint six more covers in the next five years: *The Wild Palms* (1950 Signet 659A), *Soldiers' Pay* (1951 Signet 887), *The Unvanquished* (1952 Signet 977), *Sartoris* (1953 Signet S1032), a combined *Sanctuary* and *Requiem for a Nun* (1954 Signet S1079), and *The Wild Palms* and *The Old Man* (1954 Signet S1148). The publisher, Victor Weybright, was especially fond of Faulkner and wanted to reprint a good many more than these. He liked him so much that he went to visit Faulkner in Oxford, Mississippi, in December, 1950, just after the author had been named a Nobel Laureate. He found him to be "a small and rather courtly gentleman, unmistakably Southern...a miniature and self-made cavalier..." The publisher noted "He was totally unimpressed by the high volume of our reprint sales even though he liked the revenue" (Weybright, *Making of a Publisher* 216-17). Weybright was so impressed by both the volume and the revenue, that he tried to persuade Bennett Cerf at Random House in May, 1951, to grant New American Library exclusive reprint rights to all of Faulkner's works:

> I am pleased that you were as gratified as we were by the little summary I gave you of the reception of the various Faulkner titles which we have reprinted. The advanced and accrued volume, substantial as it has been, only partially reflects the effect of our bold introduction and promotion of Faulkner as a universal writer for a universal audience. I like to feel—and hope you agree—that we have had more than a modest effect upon the direct Random House and Modern Library sales of Faulkner books to a number of people who, having enjoyed a taste of the author they once considered esoteric, have come back for more in your editions



Cover illustration for *Sanctuary* and *Requiem for a Nun*, SIGNET S1079. Oil on board, 1954

as well as in our reprint series. Ultimately, we hope to trail your entire Faulkner list with Signet editions of all his major work in such a way that we shall nourish rather than compete with your imaginative hard-bound program in both Random House and Modern Library editions. This means that we hope to alternate some of the more difficult books with some of those which are more immediately fathomable and followable by the ordinary reader. I therefore welcome your assurances that Faulkner will not be placed in competitive reprint editions. (qtd. in Bonn 35).

The ploy failed to work because Cerf held back the rights to most of Faulkner's major novels, like *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, and *Absalom, Absalom!*, for his own Vintage paperback series aimed at the booming college and classroom market.

Even though these were not the major works, the extensive Signet sales and promotion, boosted by Avati's striking covers for them, contributed in a major way to the national reputation of Faulkner as a writer worth reading. The kind of care Avati invested in them is illustrated by the thought that went into the painting for *Sanctuary* and *Requiem for a Nun*. Avati selected the scene from *Sanctuary* in which attorney Horace Benbow has located the dissipated Temple Drake in Reba Rivers' house of prostitution in Memphis, and she has told him the story of her horrible rape with a corncob by the criminal Popeye in an old mansion inhabited by bootleggers. Benbow is

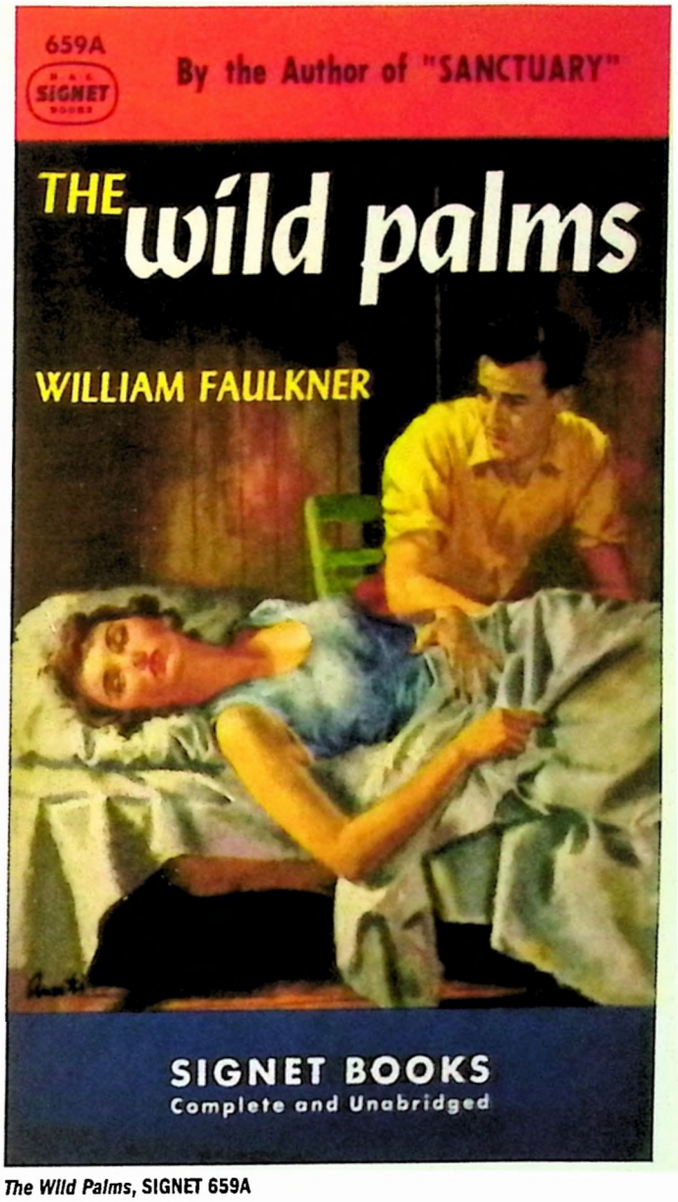
both intrigued and repulsed by the story, and when he associates Temple in his mind with his own stepdaughter, a teenager like her, he is physically nauseated.

Avati has described how he proceeded to develop the painting: "This was very directly inspired by the story itself. This girl who had come from an upper-middle class family and had turned to a very sordid existence—she was a prostitute and doing drugs and all that stuff, and this was the madam kind of personality, and I did my best to fulfill what in my imagination these people would look like. I think this guy was trying to save her, or was fascinated by her, and this is what he found, the old madam surveying her, and he is pleading with her and she's out of it." Even background details were important to Avati, who added, "I enjoyed doing this painting. I remember things like the wallpaper behind her; actually, I had looked at a Cezanne still-life which had wallpaper similar to this, and I loved it. It had very strong geometric forms, and I adopted it to my use" (qtd. in Schreuders and Fulton 137).

In the painting, Temple is sitting on a soiled, wrinkled bed, wrapped partly in a sheet and partly in a kimono, with a symbolically red dress flung behind her. She looks down dejectedly, a cigarette dangling from her lips in that sensual way women had learned to smoke from watching actresses like Lauren Bacall in Hollywood *film noir*. On the floor in the foreground, and tangled in the loose ends of the bed sheet, are two glasses and an empty liquor bottle, which clarify what the room has been used for. The neatly dressed Horace Benbow, sitting to the left of the bed, leans forward with a look of inquiry in his eyes. Between them sits the voluptuous and gaudily dressed Madam of the house Miss Reba, a glass of beer in her hand, as she considers the scene with a bland look of disinterest and distance on her face. She has heard nothing that shocks her moral sensibility, long ago jaded by a life in the flesh business.

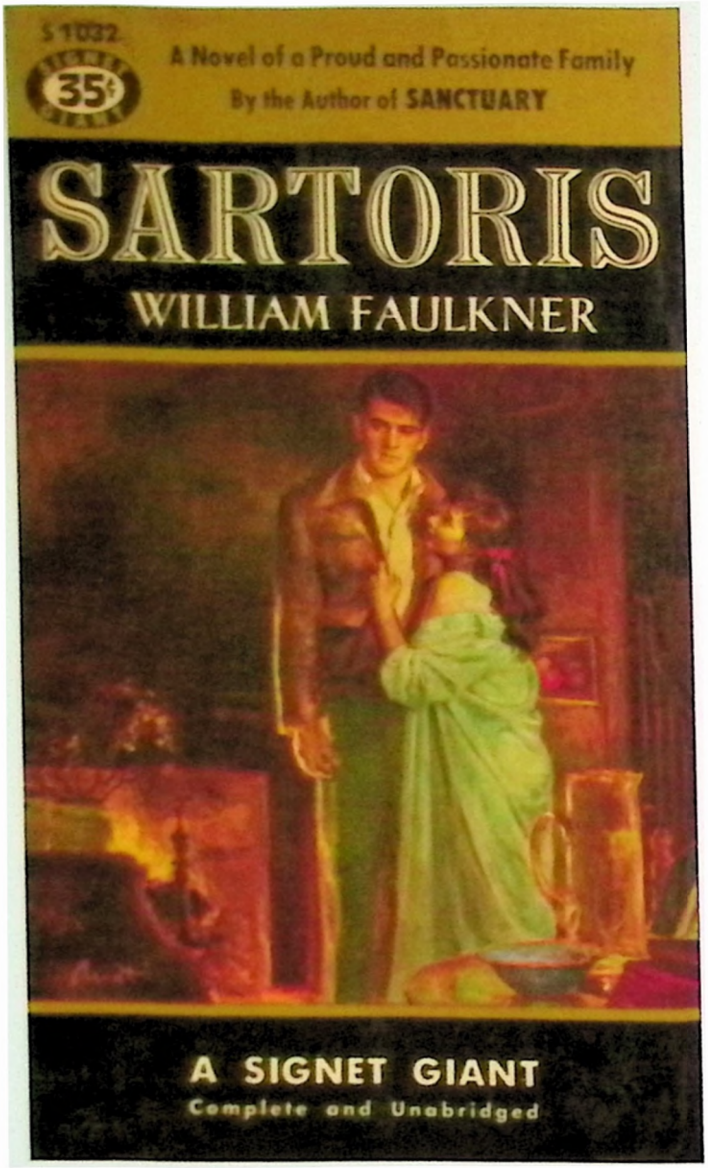
Avati has painted a powerful symbolic scene in which the sinner and the savior vie for some understanding of the nature of vice and evil, while the enabler, the pimp, stands ready to continue to profit from social and economic corruption. The balance between sin and temptation on the one hand and the possibility of redemption on the other is effectively captured as only Avati knew how to do. The painting is indeed an interpretation of the novel and its themes. It would also intrigue the reader who saw it on the newsstand.

Nearly all the Faulkner cover paintings that followed his first Signet cover in 1949 for *Intruder in the Dust* demonstrated Avati's technique of selecting from each novel a major point of emotional or symbolic crisis for illustration. *The Wild Palms* was originally a dual novel about two seemingly unrelated stories told through alternating chapters, one a tragic love story called "Wild Palms," and the second a serio-comic epic about the great Mississippi flood of 1927 called "The Old Man." The publishers separated the two stories for this edition and included only the first story for Avati to illustrate. The plot is about an ill-fated love affair between a married woman, Charlotte Rittenmeyer, and her lover Harry Wilbourne, a penniless medical intern. They run off together and lead a nomadic life trying to fend off reality from crashing in on their Edenic love.



The Wild Palms, SIGNET 659A

Avati focused on the opening of the novel which finds the two lovers in a rented beach cottage at a Mississippi Gulf Coast resort. Charlotte is lying on a crude bed hemorrhaging from a botched abortion performed by Harry, who distractedly and helplessly sits nearby. While the buxom Charlotte is still beautiful in a blue nightgown, the pain and worry on her face work counter to any eroticism. Clearly, despite Charlotte's advocacy of independence and freedom from conventional restraints on sexual behavior, here we have the consequences of illicit love and heedless passion. The plain walls and bare setting suggest that their love has led to no higher plane of life or existence. The wages of sin remain death, and Harry will be led off to prison, his only consolation being one of Faulkner's favorite lines, "*between grief and nothing I will take grief*" (324). It is interesting that Avati avoided what could have been a simple erotic scene of the two lovers involved in making love, which would have misrepresented the novel, and instead portrayed the downside and tragic results of their abandon in accordance with the mood and spirit of the original.



***Sartoris*, SIGNET S1032**

The cover of *Soldiers' Pay* in 1951 was a bit more conventional, as was the novel, Faulkner's first attempt at fiction. It was a somber and highly mannered combination of realism, psychology, social observation, and myth in the modernist tradition of T. S. Eliot and James Joyce, the story of a returned wounded and blind veteran of World War I. Shot down over Flanders and for awhile presumed dead, Donald Mahon bears a ghastly scar that his former fiancé finds unbearable, but he has been taken up by Margaret Powers, a young war widow who did not love her husband. Fated to wed Mahon, Margaret is portrayed by Avati standing in a doorway partially unclad with the ill and dieing Mahon seated in the background. The painting appears to be a literal version of a passage from the novel quoted on the back of the Signet edition: "Sex and death: the front door and the back door of the world... When are sexual compulsions more readily answered than war or famine or flood or fire?" (295).

In the 1952 cover for *The Unvanquished*, Avati went straight to the most important part and thematic center of the novel. Despite its historic, cultural, and emotional influence on all of his Yoknapatawpha fiction, except for *Absalom, Absalom!*, this was Faulkner's only Civil War novel, and the narrative follows a white boy, Bayard Sartoris, and his black companion, Ringo, during the last days of the war through their maturity during Reconstruction. Called home to avenge his father's death at the hand of a political opponent, Bayard must choose between maintaining the Southern code of blood justice or abandoning it for a less destructive mode of civil and legal order. He is tempted to exact violent revenge by his young stepmother, Drusilla Hawks, who had fought in the war disguised as a man beside his father, and she offers him his father's pistols in what is a sexually charged scene, the one Avati chose to illustrate: "Take them," she says. "I have kept them for you. I give them to you. Oh you will thank me, you will remember me who put into your hands what they say is an attribute only of God's, who took what belongs to heaven and gave it to you. Do you feel them? The long true barrels true as justice, the triggers (you have fired them) quick as retribution, the two of them slender and invincible and fatal as the physical shape of love?" (273). This provides an example too of one of Avati's period costume paintings.

The other two Faulkner covers Avati painted were fairly conventional. The 1953 painting for *Sartoris*, Faulkner's initial foray into his fictional Yoknapatawpha County, focuses on the scene in which Bayard Sartoris, bent on self-destruction, is about to desert his pregnant wife, Narcissa, to disappear and ultimately die in test-flying an aircraft. Handsome but vaguely dispirited, Bayard stands in his leather flight jacket as Narcissa clings to him in ineffective desperation. The hearth and home he is abandoning are amply illustrated in the background.

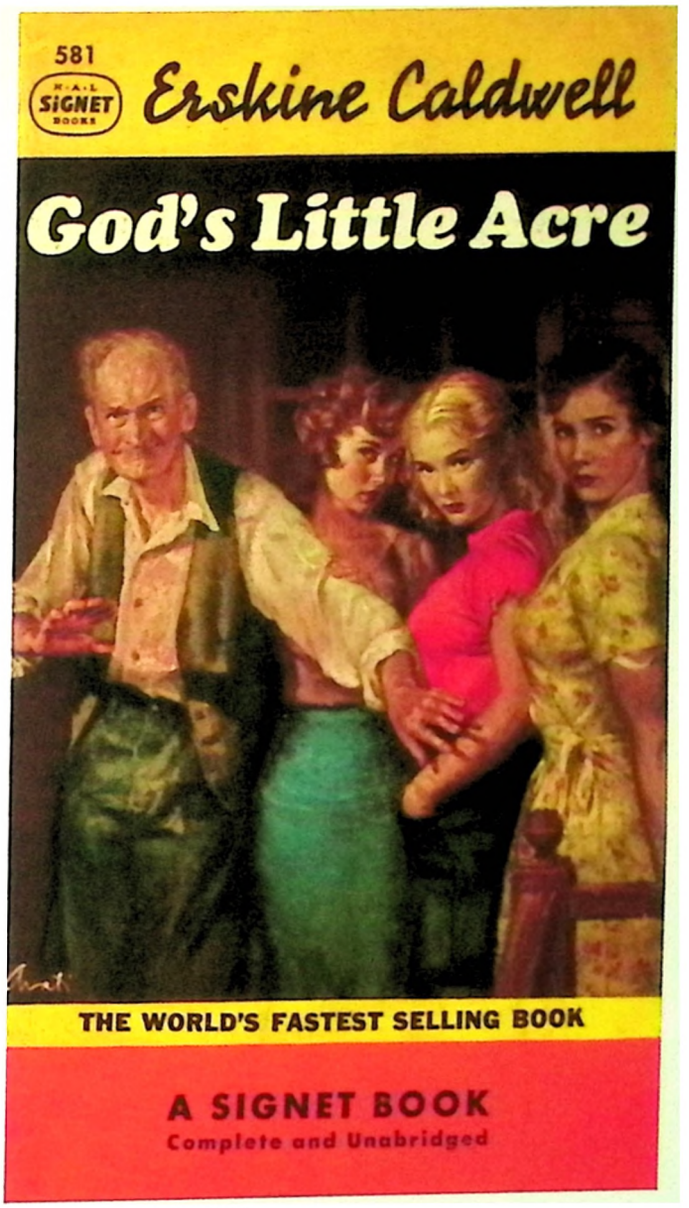
The cover for the recombined 1954 Signet edition of *The Wild Palms* and *The Old Man* portrays a buxom young woman, dressed only in Jeans and t-shirt, reclining on a porch which appears beset by flood waters and wind tearing at a tattered awning. Perhaps this is the stranded woman in "The Old Man" part of the novel resting on the porch of the bayou shack where the convict hunted alligators. If so, her pregnancy doesn't show, and she is more attractive than Faulkner leads us to believe. If it is supposed to be Charlotte Rittenmeyer on the porch of the Gulf Coast resort shack which she shares with her lover, she too is clearly not pregnant. This is one of the few times Avati seems not to have paid attention and simply provided a fetching but only vaguely related cover for a novel.

There is a degree of sensuality and sex appeal in all these paintings, but it would be inaccurate to call them "lurid," a word commonly applied to paperback cover art in general at the time. Sex was always suggested in his paintings but never explicitly displayed. They stirred anticipation but left the culmination of the situation to the reader's imagination. This was even true of his covers for the most provocative and sensually stimulating writer on the Signet list, Erskine Caldwell, with whom Avati's images became most closely identified, even among thousands of readers who never knew the artist's name. They came to know a Caldwell novel by its cover. It can be argued that the 49 covers Avati did for Caldwell's books did as much to sell them as did the steamy prose inside,

which typically dealt with bawdy tales of lust and perversion among Southern poor whites. For example, the cover of *God's Little Acre* (1951 Signet 581) features a toothless Ty Ty Walden protectively standing before the three sensual women in his household, two of them his own daughters, but provocatively reaching out to touch them with a combined sense of lust and exaltation. Caldwell's stories also dealt tellingly with social injustice, economic exploitation, and racism in the South, themes to which Avati especially responded, but the publisher seldom allowed him to make these the themes of his paintings. As Avati's biographers have noted, "Though artist and writer never got to know each other, their mutual sympathies may have aided Avati in becoming such a formidable interpreter of Caldwell. Their combined talents produced durable commercial success and amounted almost to a noncontemporary collaboration" (Schreuders and Fulton 36). Perhaps some readers thought they were buying Caldwell when they bought Faulkner.

So popular and influential did Avati's covers become that just about every other paperback artist in the country began to imitate him. Basically this meant a painterly realistic style, not so much explicit in its details as suggestive, depicting a situation which evoked emotions. His style came to be called "emotional realism" (Schreuders, *Paperbacks* 95). But his imitators lacked the discipline and strict routine he followed in his work and mostly were unable to capture that scene or symbolic situation in the plot that summarized the meaning, if they read the novel at all. After years of painting, Avati even began to feel imprisoned by his own accomplishments and felt the need to break away from his own style. He came to see himself as a reflection of himself and wanted to do something different. "Other publishers started telling their artists to imitate *me*," he once said, "and pretty soon the Avati-look was everywhere. It got to the point where I had to stop doing Avati covers. I was estranged from my own style, I had to start doing something else" (qtd. in Schreuders, *Paperbacks* 94). But the work accomplished in the years with Signet between 1949 and 1960 earned him a reputation as the grand master of paperback art, or as his publishers called him, their "own Rembrandt" (Schreuders and Fulton 36). It also constitutes a rich and intelligent reading of and an informative commentary on 20th century literature in America. Stanley Meltzoff, a talented paperback artist himself, and always his strongest supporter, said in 1980, "Avati stands alone, not only as the great pioneer, but also as the best of us all, right up to today. He is the only one that counts—everyone else just passed through" (qtd. in Schreuders, *Paperbacks* 199).

As Alison M. Scott has noted in a discussion of the archival importance of pulps and paperbacks in the study of American culture, "Researchers who investigate the material qualities and physical appearance of these ephemeral volumes may ... receive the greatest return for their efforts, for in many significant ways you *can* tell these books by their covers. That is to say, pulp magazines and paperback books are substantive cultural artifacts that carry, on the slick, coated paper of their covers and the rough, cheap newsprint of their pages, abundant information about the circumstances of their creation and meaning" (41). In a different context, a discussion of the application of textual criticism to Faulkner, and especially the need to take into account the material, physical features of his books, Amy E.C. Linnemann and Philip Cohen have argued, "Indeed, aspects of his reception may have been shaped by whether or not readers were holding in their hands a first edition of a particular novel, a New American Library or Signet paperback of the late 1940s and the 1950s with its lurid cover art and breathless, suggestive blurbs, or one of the glossy, upscale Library of America trade editions of the late 1980s and the 1990s" (297). As I have indicated earlier, I would disagree with the use of the word "lurid" here, but the point remains that any assessment of the work of a great writer like Faulkner must necessarily entail an examination of the full culture in which the writer lived and worked, and even something as seemingly inconsequential as an illustration, a photograph, a cartoon, or the cover of a paperback novel may play a part in our appreciation and understanding of what the writer accomplished.



***God's Little Acre*, SIGNET 581**

It was Faulkner's good fortune then to have assigned to several of his novels for Signet the most popular and easily recognized but most thoughtful and gifted of the paperback artists. It may be argued that the immediate recognition enjoyed by Avati and his style brought attention to Faulkner and led to his novels many readers who would not have read them ordinarily in hard cover. This was one more in a series of fortuitous circumstances that brought Faulkner the wider appreciation he deserved—*The Portable Faulkner* in 1946, the Nobel Prize in 1950, and the distribution of his works in millions of Signet paperbacks between 1949 and 1954 with the compelling, interpretive paintings of James Avati on their covers.

— by M. Thomas Inge, 2017

M. Thomas Inge is the Blackwell Professor of Humanities at Randolph-Macon College, where he teaches and writes about American popular culture and comic art. He is the author or editor of over 60 books.

NOTE

A valuable introduction to the man, his art, and his working techniques can be found in the VHS video produced by Piet Schreuders, *James Avati: A Life in Paperbacks*, released in 2000 by Kultur Video, No. 2134. I wish to thank Piet Schreuders for his previous work, which has brought Avati much of the praise and respect he deserved as a major American artist. I also appreciate his generosity in sharing images and information without which this paper could not have been written. A special note of gratitude is due Avati's daughter, Jennifer Avati Lemos, who has kindly granted permission on behalf of the Avati Estate for the reproduction of the several paintings that accompany this article.

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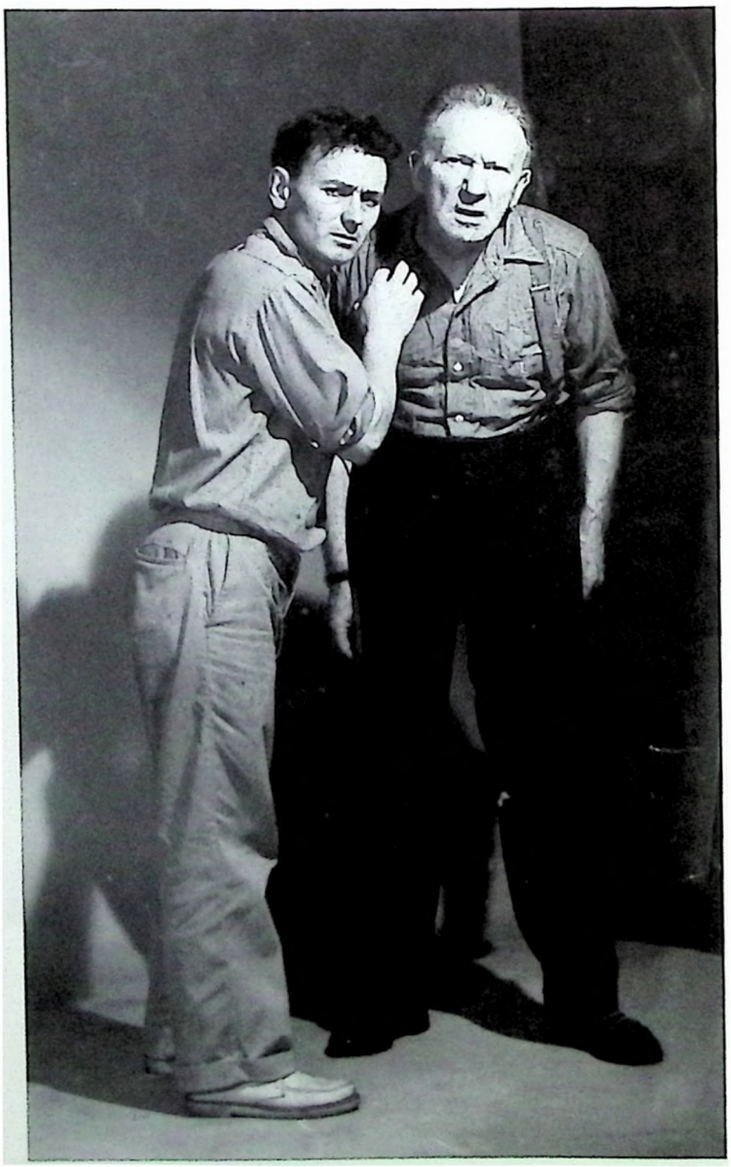
11. Cover. *God's Little Acre*. By Erskine Caldwell. New York: New American Library Signet Books, 1951. No. 581. Copyright © Estate of James S. Avati. Reprinted by permission.



Jim Avati posing with his 'favorite old man' for Signet 567, *Trouble In July*, 1956

Illustration House

34 West 27 Street, ste 400 New York, New York 10001

W. T. Benda (1873-1948) Watercolor, ink and colored pencil, 7 x 6.5", remaining part of *Life* magazine cover, March 8, 1923
This is a depiction of the first mask Benda made, which he called The Blue Demon, in February 1914.

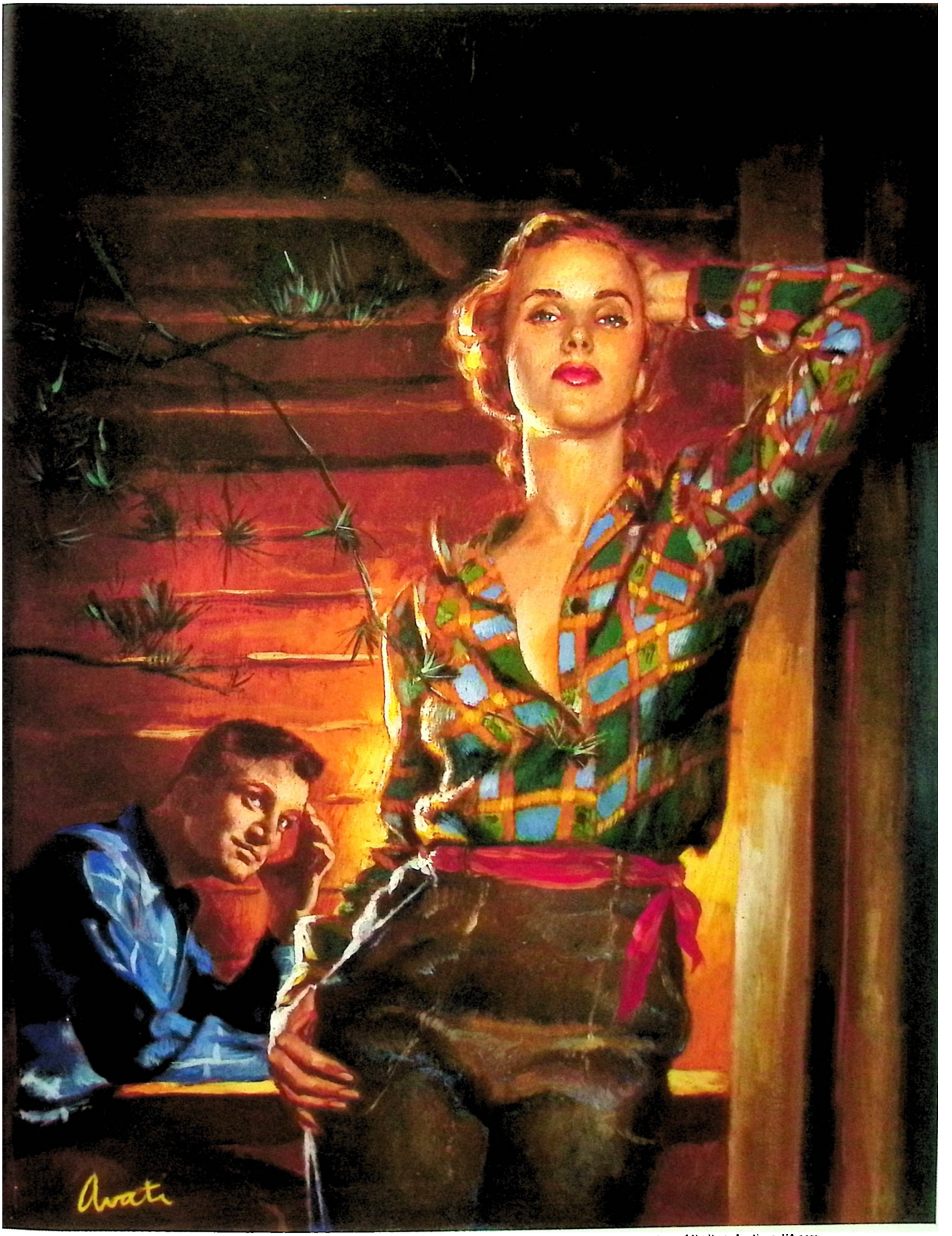
www.illustrationhouse.com ☎ 212/966-9444

PAPERBACK COVERS BY JAMES AVATI

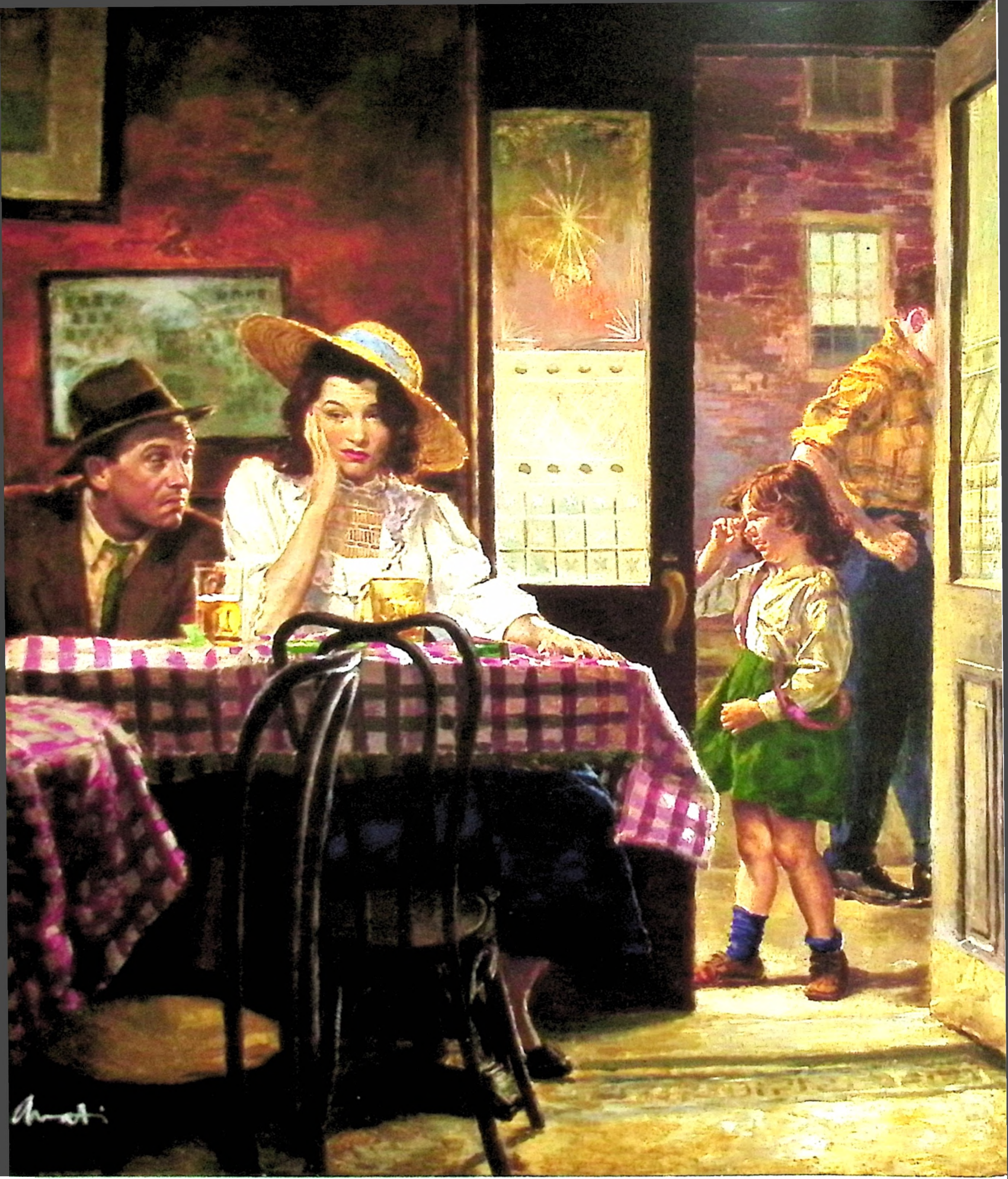
Cover illustration for *Fifty Roads to Town* by Early Hammer, Jr. SIGNET S1271, 1956. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

Cover Illustration for *Tobacco Road* by Erskine Caldwell. SIGNET 627, 1954. Oil on board. Collection of Brugh Joy

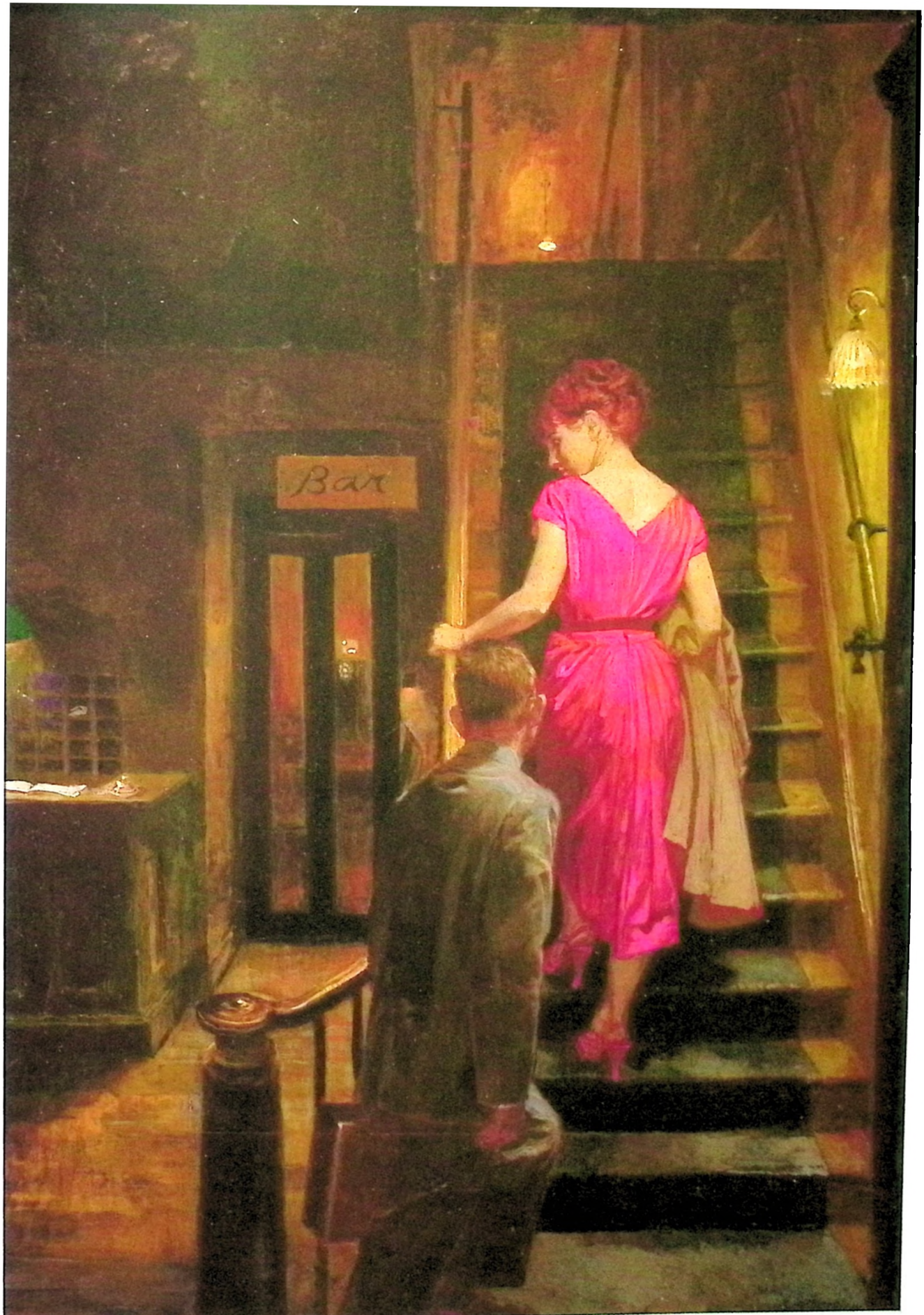
Cover Illustration for *A Dangerous Woman and Other Stories* by James T. Farrell. SIGNET S1457, 1957. Oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY



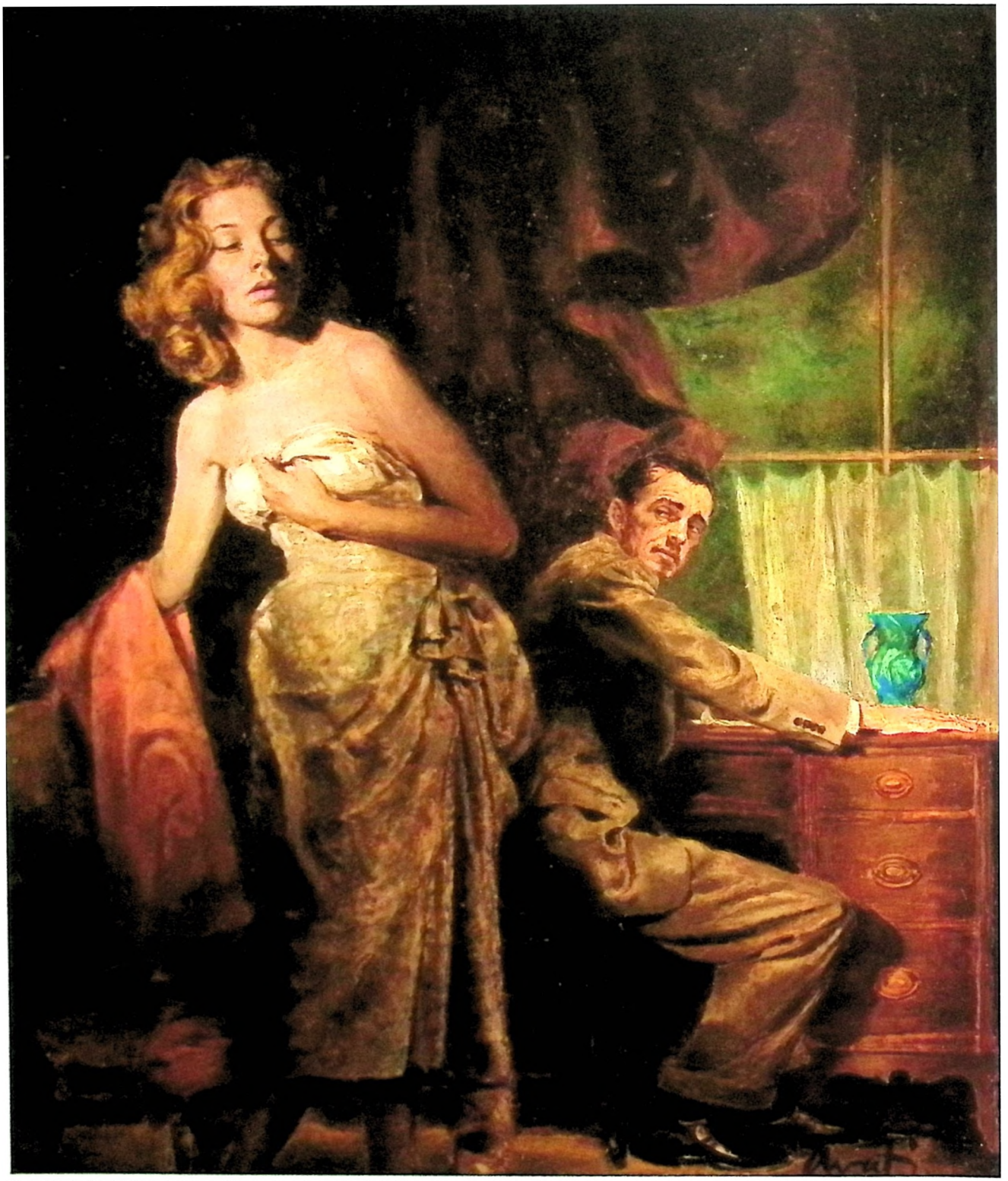
Cover Illustration for *Beyond the Forest* by Stuart Engstrand. SIGNET 739, 1949. Oil on board, 16.25" x 13.25". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com



Cover illustration for *No Star Is Lost* by James T. Farrell. SIGNET D946, 1952. Oil on board. Photo courtesy of Illustration House, NY

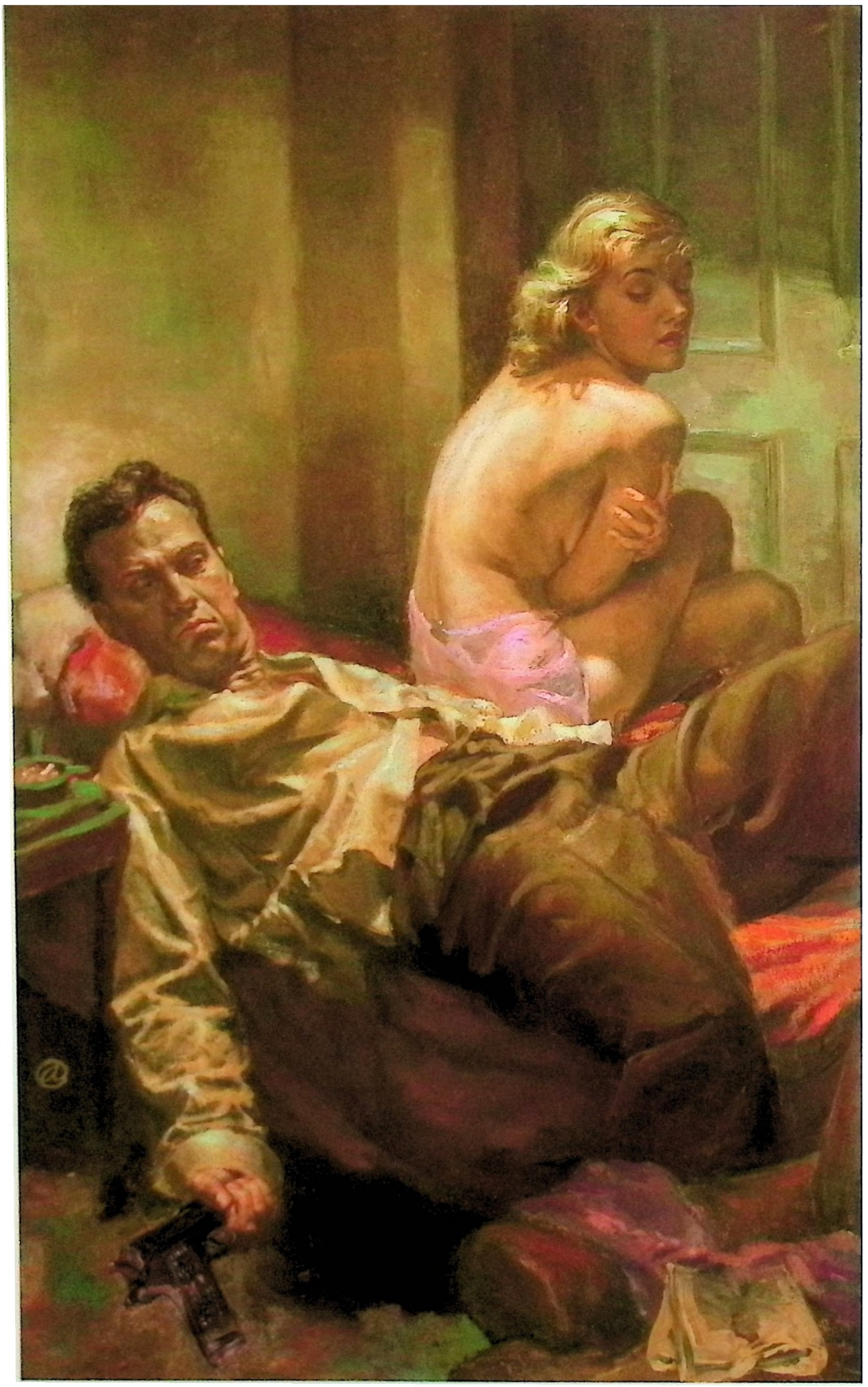


Cover illustration for *The Farmer's Hotel* by John O'Hara, BANTAM A2203, 1960. Oil on masonite, 22.5" x 15.25". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

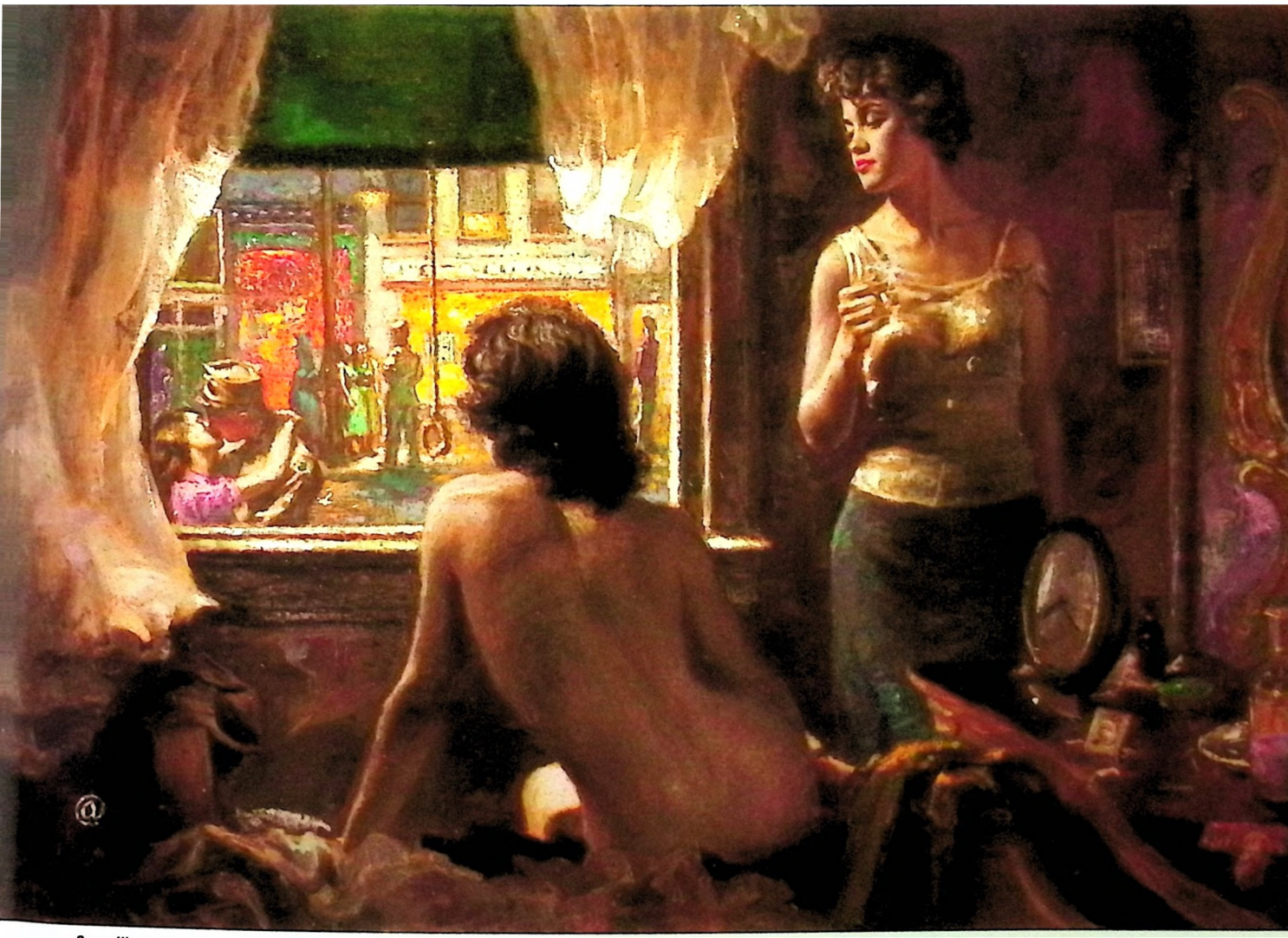


Cover illustration for *Conjugal Love* by Alberto Moravia. SIGNET 922, 1952. Oil on board, 20" x 17". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Cover Illustration for *Goodbye to Berlin* by Christopher Isherwood. SIGNET 937, 1952. Oil on board, 24.5" x 20.5". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com



Cover Illustration for *Love Trap* by Lionel White. SIGNET 1204, 1955. Oil on board, 30.5" x 20". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com



Cover Illustration for *Louisville Saturday* by Margaret Long. BANTAM A1848, 1958. Oil on board, 12" x 18". Photo courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com

GUM'S GRAPHICS

by John Witek

"This will never be a civilized country until we spend more money for books than we do for chewing gum."
—Elbert Hubbard

Modern gum got its start in the 1860s, when experimenter Thomas Adams, with help from the conqueror of the Alamo General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, sought to produce a cheap rubber substitute from Mexico's Manilkara chicle plant. While his rubber making experiments were unsuccessful, Adams created something that was decidedly more pleasant to chew than the paraffin wax product sold in pharmacies. He called the substance Adams New York Number One, and it was the first of many contributions to an industry he helped to create. Before he died in 1905, Thomas Adams built the first gum factory, invented the world's first flavored gum (licorice flavored Adams Black Jack), and installed the first chewing gum vending machine in the New York City subway system.

Gum! It's a bigger deal than you might think. Americans masticate about 195 million pounds of it annually, an amount representing over two billion dollars in sales. Thanks to the persuasive power of advertising, we chew gum to curb hunger, reduce stress, recover lost energy, and freshen our breaths. Offering a stick of gum to a stranger is a time-honored way of breaking the ice. And kids were never the same after bubble gum and baseball cards came along. Smart advertising made gum popular, particularly during the Golden Age of Illustration when manufacturers promoted gum with some of the most notable marketing efforts of the day. Illustrators, both famous and anonymous, helped to make gum a favorite product here and abroad, as the following examples will demonstrate.

"Make a fair product for a fair price, then tell the world."
—William Wrigley, Jr.

Boisterous and flamboyant, super salesman William Wrigley, Jr. started giving away packs of gum in 1892 as an inducement to vendors to stock his baking powder. When he saw that the vendors were more excited about gum than baking powder, Wrigley shifted focus and never looked back. At a time when many consumers considered gum chewing uncouth, Wrigley promoted gum's positive aspects in a variety of leading publications. A born showman, he created a spectacular block-long display in New York's Times Square with over 17,000 flashing light bulbs depicting animated versions of his company's mascot, the Spearman. Before he was through, he built a chewing gum

Billboard Illustration for Wrigley's Gum by Otis Shepard

empire in Chicago and purchased Catalina Island and the Chicago Cubs with profits from the sales of Doublemint, Spearmint, and Juicy Fruit gum. When his son, Philip Knight "P. K." Wrigley, inherited the family business upon William's death in 1932, the company was the largest chewing gum manufacturer in North America.

P. K. was a thoughtful man who believed that advertising could rise to the level of art. It was an ideal he would find reflected in the work of graphic designer Otis Shepard, who would ultimately become art director for the entire Wrigley organization, and its president's lifelong friend.

Otis "Shep" Shepard was born in Smartville, Kansas, in 1894. Although he had little formal education, he was blessed with precocious artistic talent, and the courage to apply that talent to any freelance job that came his way. A combat veteran of World War I, he served as his battalion's art director, after which he was employed designing billboards for one of the top ad agencies of the day, the prestigious San Francisco firm of Foster and Kleiser Outdoor Advertising.

Billboards were a very hip advertising medium in the 1920s. They were huge, colorful, and it took an exceptional art director to visualize what would work well in all that space. Artists who created these leviathans were looked upon with envy and respect.

By the time Shepard had joined Wrigley's he had married the modernist designer Dorothy Van Gorder, with whom he would collaborate for most of his life. He had toured Europe several times, where he saw sophisticated advertising posters made with the airbrush, a tool used mostly in the U.S. for photo retouching.

The airbrush produced a clean, seamless look, and subtle gradations of plane and color that allowed Shepard to communicate with symbols such as the Doublemint Twins, which he used to represent the double dose of flavor in every stick of gum. In one year alone, his modernist designs appeared on 20,000 billboards across the country. His writings on the airbrush are credited as having popularized the tool for widespread use in the United States.

Otis Shepard continued on at Wrigley's, bringing the clean, spare look of modernity to the company's many interests—a broad spectrum of enterprises including Santa Catalina Island, The Chicago Cubs, The Arlington Park Race Track, and the

Billboard illustration for Wrigley's Gum by Otis Shepard

Billboard illustration for Wrigley's Gum by Otis Shepard

Billboard illustration for Wrigley's Gum by Otis Shepard

Billboard illustration for Wrigley's Gum by Otis Shepard, 1939

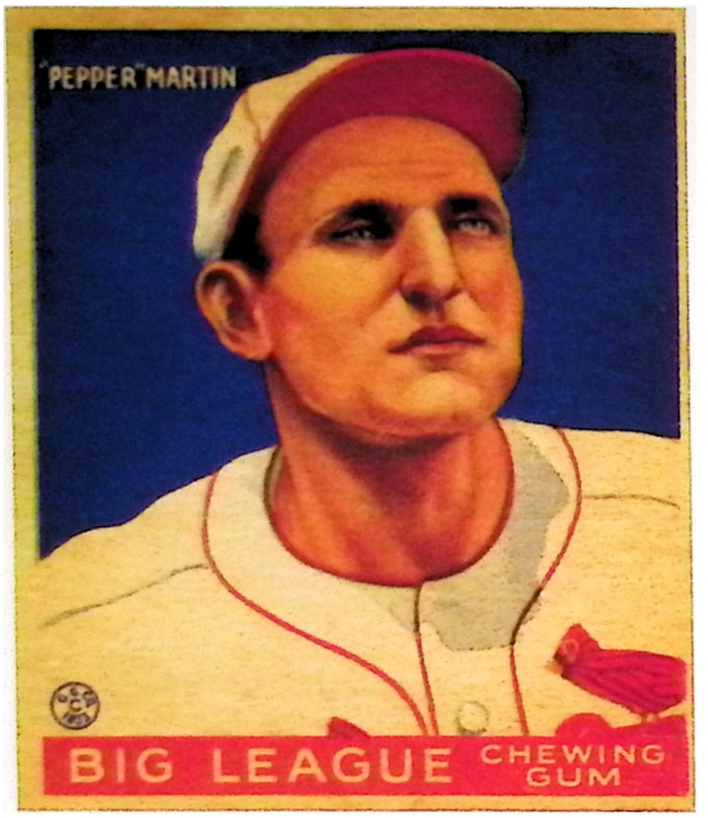
countless programs, yearbooks, space ads, and ephemera that go with them. He was an artist who knew how to simplify, and he summarized his life's work in one simple sentence: "To me," he said, "the art of advertising is stating the truth attractively."

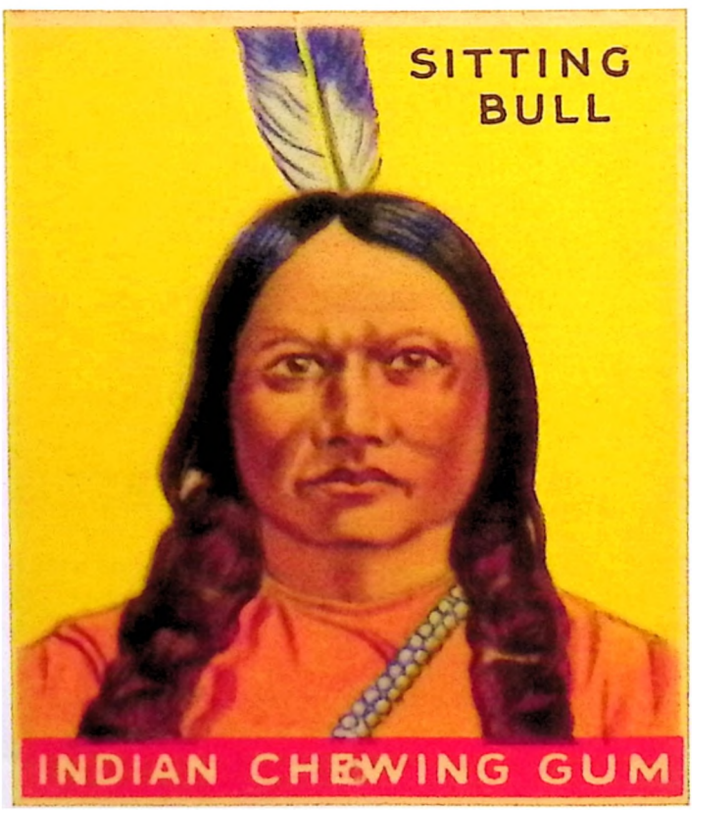
UP IN SMOKE ON A COLD WINTER'S NIGHT

Thanks to Norman Hathaway and Dan Nadel's stunning coffee table volume *Dorothy and Otis: Designing The American Dream*, we can attach names and faces to Wrigley's decades of modernist advertising. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for whomever designed the artful gum cards produced by the Goudy Gum Company of Boston, Massachusetts.

In 1933, Goudy became the first company in America to issue trading cards with a stick of gum for a penny. Unlike the flimsy but handsomely illustrated trade cards traditionally given away with packages of candy and tobacco, Goudy's bright, colorful cards were made of thick, sturdy cardboard measuring 2.5 x 2.75 inches. One of its first sets was *Indian Gum*, an historic series that used images of native Americans obtained from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. This was soon followed by *Big League Chewing Gum*, a 240 card series that is arguably the finest gum card series ever created—one in which commercial images do rise to the level of art. In 2016 the Metropolitan Museum Of Art in New York City put the cards on display, and enjoyed their enthusiastic reception by baseball fans and art buffs alike.

Goudy's *Big League* gum cards featured ball stars from the 1920s and early 30s, some of whom were seen here in closeup for the very first time. The series' images are set against an assortment of colored backgrounds and range from players' portraits, to action poses of big leaguers playing the



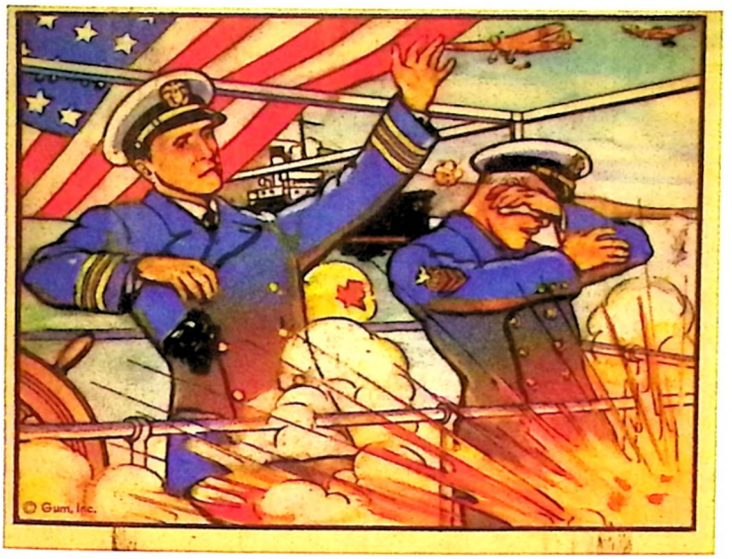


positions that made them famous.

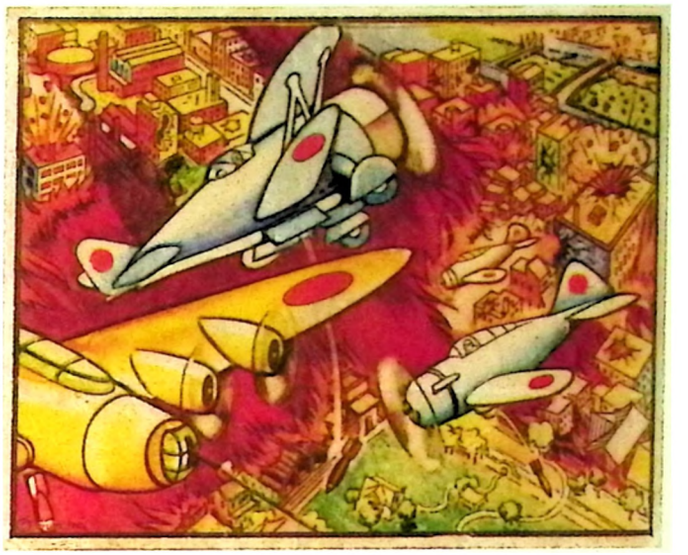
With greater verisimilitude than the cigarette cards that preceded them and finer imagery than the flood of cards that followed, Goudy's *Big League Chewing Gum* series evokes a classic era of American baseball like nothing else in print.

Many cards in the series have the smooth, streamlined look of the airbrush. It has also been suggested that the primitive silkscreen manufacturing process that produced these evoca-

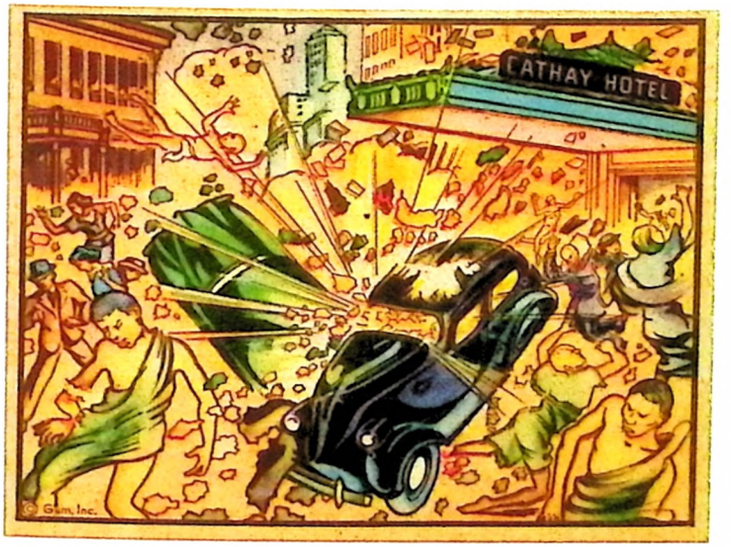
Packaging Illustration for Lucky Brown Lemon Fragrance Cleansing Cream



Card from *The Horrors of War* set, Gum, Inc.



Card from *The Horrors of War* set, Gum, Inc.



Card from *The Horrors of War* set, Gum, Inc.

Card from *The Horrors of War* set, Gum, Inc.

tive cards gave them the look collectors love. Regrettably, we don't know who printed them. We don't know who did the art. And we probably never shall.

By the winter of 1960, Goudy had fallen upon hard times and was without the funds needed to heat the building it occupied. With the temperature dropping fast, the decision was made to keep the place a little warmer a little longer by burning all of the company's records and inventory. Quite possibly, the identity of *Big League*'s lost designer went up the chimney in a puff of smoke on that cold New England night.

"*To know the horrors of war is to want peace.*"

While most commercial illustrations come and go without fanfare, Gum Inc.'s *Horrors of War* trading cards made a huge stir that included demands for a formal apology from the empire of Japan.

Created for Gum, Inc. in 1938 by the art department of the George Moll Advertising Agency of Philadelphia, *The Horrors of War* reported the grim details of the Sino-Japanese War unfolding in China. The series targeted children and its controversial images included a parcel full of severed hands, soldiers burning alive, dogs feasting on human remains, and anything and everything that qualified as an authentic horror of war. Although a few of the cards reported on other conflicts, such as Italy's war on Ethiopia and Spain's civil war, Japan's villainy was portrayed realistically enough to touch off anti-American riots in Tokyo. Shocking, sensational, and successful, the series made Gum Inc.'s president J. Warren Bowman a millionaire. Bubble gum's war in China was featured in *LIFE* magazine, and the 240 card series is generally considered to be the most famous non-sports series of all time.

There's a good chance that the artist responsible for *The Horrors of War* was the Moll agency's principal art director, Charles Steinbacher. It remains unclear, however, if he was the original artist for the cards or the person who pulled everything together, or both. In any event and for whatever reason, he kept much of "Horrors" original artwork locked in a safe for decades.

After Steinbacher's passing in 1966, the key to the safe

Card from *The Horrors of War* set, Gum, Inc.

Card from *The Horrors of War* set, Gum, Inc.

was lost and nobody gave it a second thought for almost 30 years . . . nobody, that is, except Steinbacher's son Michael, who pestered his mother until she called a locksmith.

It was 1993 when the door to the safe finally swung open. For the first time in years, daylight fell upon its contents illuminating a jumble of papers, gum cards, sketches and photographs, about 600 items in all. Included among the papers was a stack of illustrations that have come to be called the Dead Sea Scrolls of gum cards—original illustrations for *The Horrors of War.*

Strange as it seems, the tiny drawings are the exact size of the finished product and measure 2.25 x 2.75 inches. Each of these miniature works of art are filled with so many details that it is hard to imagine that the meticulous artwork was done by anything less than a team of illustrators working in shifts around the clock.

Steinbacher's safe also disclosed original art from Gum Inc's *War Gum* series that was published in 1942. *War Gum*'s original illustrations were larger than those for *The Horrors of War.* Penciled and inked on illustration board, the black and white drawings were covered by a tracing paper overlay upon which colored pencils were used to color the drawings beneath. The new size was a 6 x 4.75 inch sketch area on card stock measuring about an inch more on all sides.

War Gum's use of hand-colored overlays may have helped to emphasize the distinctive spectrum of colors seen in the printed cards. Attractive pastel tones and uncommon pairings of pinks and purples, blues and greens gave the series a different look than its predecessors.

Gum, Inc.'s second war series also differed from its first in content. Although violent action was still the cornerstone of the series, blood and gore were curtailed. Ironically however, the war that made Bowman's cards so popular put the company out of business for the duration. Wartime shortages and government restrictions for cardboard and chewing gum kept Gum, Inc. on ice until the war had come to an end.

Americans today don't chew as much gum as we did in the days of Wrigley and Bowman. Too many negative reports have singled out gum as a bad habit and a source of problems down the road. Manufacturers needn't worry, however.

While gum sales in the U.S. have fallen off somewhat, they're chewing up a storm in China, where there are no warnings, restrictions, or cultural prohibitions to diminish this simple pleasure. Gum, anyone?

— by John Witek, 2017

John Witek is an Emmy-Award winning writer and producer of television documentaries. His papers on history, pre-history, and archaeology have appeared in various scholarly publications.

The author would like to thank Christopher Hatten, Senior Curator at The Huntington Museum Of Art, for his kind assistance in providing high resolution scans for the images in this and other articles.

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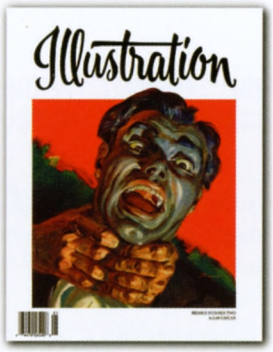

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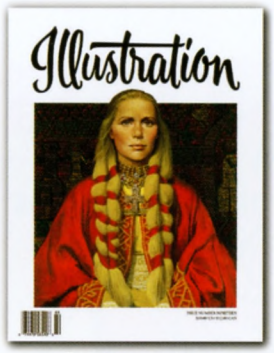
○ RE-ISSUE #3



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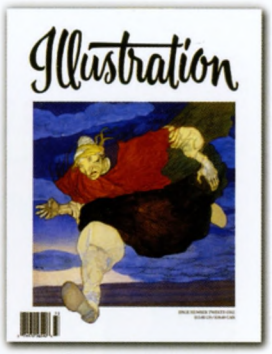

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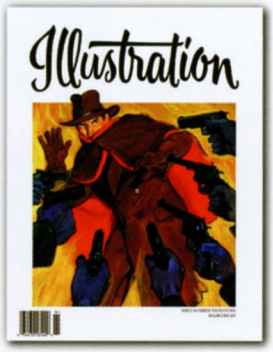

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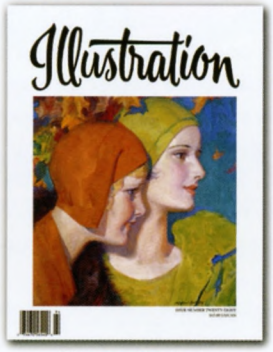

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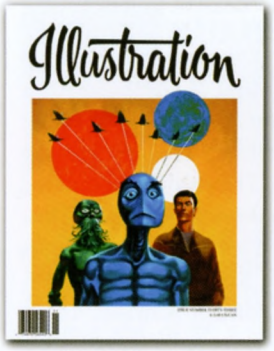

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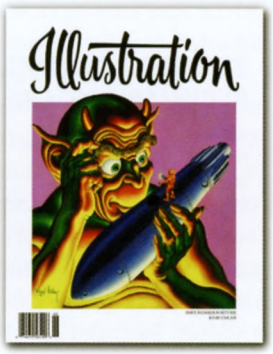

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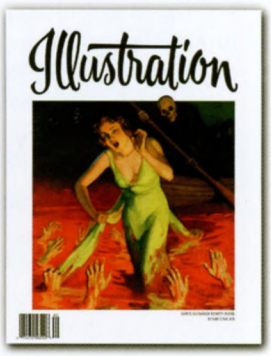

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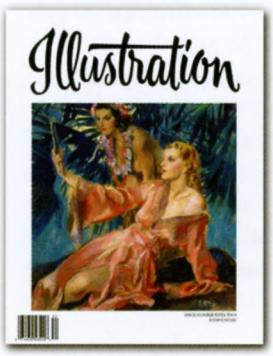

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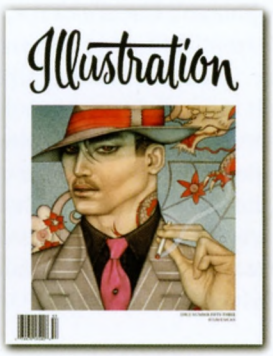

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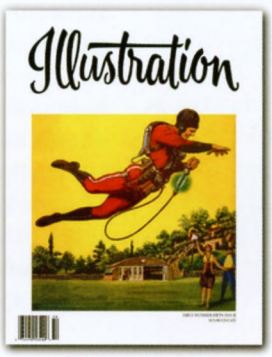

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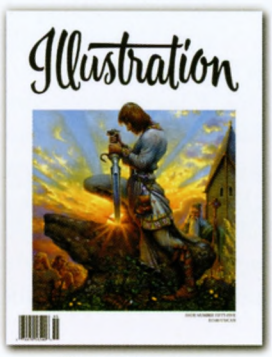

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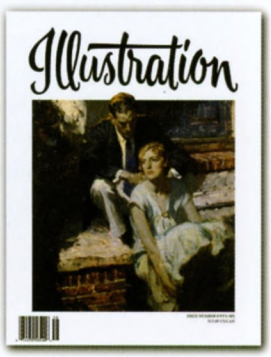

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New and Notable:

THE ART OF REGINALD HEADE

BY STEPHEN JAMES WALKER
168 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$49.00, HARDCOVER, NO DUSTJACKET
TELOS BOOKS, 2017

Reginald Heade was the pre-eminent British pulp fiction cover artist of the 1940s and 1950s. His beautifully-rendered, erotically-charged depictions of a parade of sexy, scantily-clad young virgins and vixens are near-legendary amongst lovers of classic pin-up art. This encompasses the famous Hank Janson novels, dozens of other outstanding pin-up style and erotic covers, plus his less-well-known but equally exceptional work for adult hardback fiction dustjackets, children's books and periodicals.

The book even includes a selection of the pieces he produced under the name Cy Webb. The original books on which they appeared are now highly-sought-after collectibles—in some cases, only a handful of copies are known still to survive.

Lavishly illustrated, *The Art of Reginald Heade* is packed with hundreds of superb color and black-and-white images, and author Stephen James Walker presents the most comprehensive overview ever published of Heade's life and work.

TITILLATION: THE VINTAGE PIN-UP ART OF PETER DRIBEN

BY STEPHEN JAMES WALKER
190 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$39.95, SOFTCOVER
TELOS BOOKS, 2017

Peter Driben was one of the most prolific cover artists to work in the risqué "girlie pulp" magazines that flourished between the mid-1920s and the mid-1950s. This meticulously-researched, lavishly-illustrated book is a glorious celebration of his work, and an essential addition to the bookshelves of anyone with a taste for classic pin-up and magazine cover artwork.

While most of this collection features the cover art from his long career, it also includes quite a few reproductions from the original paintings themselves. *Silk Stockings*, *Wink*, *Movie Humor*, *High Heels*, *Bedtime Stories*, *Pep*, *Snappy*, *La Paree*, *Spicy*, *Eyeful*, *Flirt*, *Whisper*...he worked for them all.

One chapter, "Just for Laughs," explores his little-known humor magazine work. Still featuring sexy ladies on the covers, these nonetheless were more humor than girlie magazines. Driben also did crime and detective magazines, including covers for *Inside Detective*, *Expose Detective*,*Special Detective*, and *Detective Year Book*. He also did paperback covers, mostly in the crime genre: *Say Yes to Murder*, *The Traveling Corpses*, *Bedroom Eyes*, *Unwilling Bride* and *Hard Boiled Mistress*. Finally, there is a fascinating section, "Is It Driben?", in which are included unsigned, unattributed covers of both paperback books and magazines that look to be Driben, but there is no documentation.

HOWARD PYLE, HIS STUDENTS, & THE GOLDEN AGE OF AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION

BY JUDY GOFFMAN CUTLER & LAWRENCE S. CUTLER
260 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$35.00, SOFTCOVER
DREXEL UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017

This catalogue is a companion to the traveling exhibition of the same name, debuting at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA from April 3–June 18, 2017, and at the National Museum of American Illustration in Newport, RI from July 6–December 29, 2017.

The show and catalogue are an exploration and comparison of artworks by Howard Pyle, his students, and their peers. Pyle (1854–1911), known as the "Father of American Illustration", was a prolific illustrator as well as a major author of books and periodicals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1894 Pyle founded the first school of illustration at Drexel Institute of Art, Science, and Industry (now Drexel University), and later founded the Howard Pyle School of Illustration Art in the Brandywine River area at Chadds Ford, PA. The students attending his school became known as the "Brandywine School of Illustrators." The book includes biographical information examples and artwork of: Howard Pyle, Norman Rockwell, J.C. Leyendecker, Maxfield Parrish, Howard Chandler Christy, Frank Schoonover, N.C. Wyeth, Violet Oakley, Jessie Willcox Smith, Elizabeth Shippen Green, and over 20 other illustrators.

BEAUTIFUL MACABRE: RARE AND PECULIAR POSTERS, 1862-1971

92 PAGES, FULL COLOR
5.5 X 8.5 INCHES
$29.00, SOFTCOVER
CENTURY GUILD BOOKS, 2017

For nearly 20 years, Century Guild has exhibited rare posters in venues as varied as L.A. Art, The Merchandise Mart International Antiques Fair, and San Diego Comic Con. Works previously in the Century Guild collection have been displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Detroit Institute of Art, and LACMA.

While the internet is a magnificent repository of data, many—if not most—of the images in this book are not available on the internet at all. The posters presented were all professionally photographed and color corrected, and now printed at the highest resolution possible.

Over 70 extremely rare images from the Century Guild collection are collected featuring full-page, full-color images, along with historical commentary.

TRANSCENDENT LUXURY: GERMAN ART DECO POSTER MASTERPIECES, 1912-1927

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CENTURY GUILD BOOKS, 2017

During and immediately following The First World War, advertisers in Germany presented romantic elegance in a manner that bridged the sinuous lines of Art Nouveau and the hard lines of the Art Deco period to achieve a unique style that would inform the rest of the century as a pinnacle of graphic design. This book presents a collection of stunning high resolution photographs of posters from the Century Guild Museum of Art that gives insight to the opulent aesthetics of the era, 70 of the finest and rarest German posters from between 1914 and 1927 to make a beautiful and inexpensive softcover book. There is brief text throughout in the manner of a museum or gallery tour, giving a gentle overview of the subject matter.

WALLY WOOD: GALAXY ART AND BEYOND

BY ROGER HILL
160 PAGES, PARTIAL COLOR
$29.99, HARDCOVER
IDW PUBLISHING, 2017

Wally Wood first came to fame working on Will Eisner's *The Spirit* newspaper strip, and was one of the most talented artists working for EC Comics during the 1950s. He also became a star of EC's satire comic, *Mad* magazine, which allowed Wood to apply his prodigious talents to other genres. During this time he also worked with Jack Kirby on *Skymasters*, and for Marvel Comics, producing *Daredevil* and other titles, *THUNDER Agents*, and much more.

After EC's demise in 1955, Wood segued into the field of science fiction pulp illustration, providing over 200 drawings and color cover paintings for magazines like *Galaxy* and for specialty book publishers. Wood began his pulp career with interior illustrations in 1959 for Fiction House's pulp titles *Jungle Stories* and *Planet Stories*. Much of this has never been reprinted—until now. Author Roger Hill has spent the past 20 years pulling together the history of Wood's involvement with the pulp digests and tracking down original art for this project. Over half of the images have been pulled from the originals or from Wood's personal file copies, resulting in the finest possible reproduction quality.

Hill's introductory history covers it all...from the origins of pulp digests like *Galaxy* and *If*, where the majority of Wood's work would appear, to the unique and special book covers he did for tiny book publishers. Wood also did painted covers for *Galaxy's* paperback line, and complete sci-fi novels in digest form, such as *Mission of Gravity*, *Twice in Time*, and *The Forever Machine*. Most are superlative.

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EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Howard Pyle, His Students, and The Golden Age of American Illustration

April 4 through June 18, 2017
Paul Peck Alumni Center, Drexel University, PA

This exhibition features oil paintings, works on paper, and accompanying artifacts that highlight the work of Howard Pyle, known as the "Father of American Illustration", and the generation of celebrated illustrators he taught. In 1894, Pyle founded the first School of Illustration in America at Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry, now Drexel University, shaping the way illustrators created artworks thereafter.

Howard Pyle taught at the Drexel Institute until 1900 when he founded the Howard Pyle School of Illustration in Wilmington, Delaware. His students at both schools became known as "The Brandywine School", which included some of America's greatest illustrators: Stanley Arthurs, Anna and Ethel Betts, Harvey Dunn, Anton Otto Fischer, Philip R. Goodwin, Elizabeth Shippen Green, W.H.D. Koerner, Violet Oakley, Frank Schoonover, Jessie Willcox Smith, Sarah Stilwell Weber and N.C. Wyeth.

Pyle's innovative teaching methods encouraged his students to live their illustrations, therefore painting from experience, not merely from observation. This new principle, taught at the verge of the publishing boom of the 20th Century, laid the foundation for a century of America's iconic illustrators. His influences greatly contributed to illustrative painting and drawing becoming one of the truest forms of applied art.

To highlight the importance of Pyle's teachings on all of America's Golden Age illustrators, artworks from later periods will be on display, including Norman Rockwell, J.C. Leyendecker and Howard Chandler Christy.

A 260-page catalogue will accompany this exhibition, available now at www.AmericanIllustration.org.

For more information, visit: www.drexel.edu/pennoni

Will Eisner: The Centennial Celebration 1917–2017

March 1 through June 3, 2017
The Society of Illustrators, NY

This two-floor retrospective—the largest Eisner exhibition ever in the United States—curated by Denis Kitchen and John Lind, comprises over 150 pieces including original artwork from *Smash Comics* (1939), key sequences from his graphic novels including *A Contract with God* (1978), *Life on Another Planet* (1983), *A Life Force* (1988), *To the Heart of the Storm* (1991), and over 40 pages of originals from *The Spirit* (1940–1952) newspaper section. Also included are personal items from Eisner's career, such as his studio drawing board, brushes, and awards. An oversized hardcover catalogue, published by the Kitchen Sink Books imprint of Dark Horse Books, accompanies this exhibition.

For more information, visit: www.societyillustrators.org

The Korshak Collection: Illustrations of Imaginative Literature

March 30, 2017 through May 16, 2017
Albin O. Kuhn Gallery, University of Maryland, MD

Original iconic science fiction and fantasy artworks from the collection of Stephen Korshak will be on display. Works by Frank Frazetta, Virgil Finlay, Gustaf Tenggren, J. Allen St. John, and many more are featured.

For more information, visit: www.umbc.edu/aok

The Original Mad Man: Illustrations by Mac Conner

June 24, 2017 through September 17, 2017
The Delaware Art Museum, DE

McCauley ("Mac") Conner (born 1913) created advertising campaigns for a variety of products during the decade when the advertising industry was at its height and centered on Madison Avenue. His illustrations for leading women's magazines such as *Redbook* and *McCall's* animated a wide range of popular literature, from romantic fiction and detective stories, to topics of import such as Cold War anxiety and juvenile delinquency. His work is a "time capsule" of an era when commercial artists helped to redefine American style and culture.

For more information, visit: www.delart.org

Know of any upcoming exhibitions or events related to the world of art and classic illustration? Email: illomag@gmail.com

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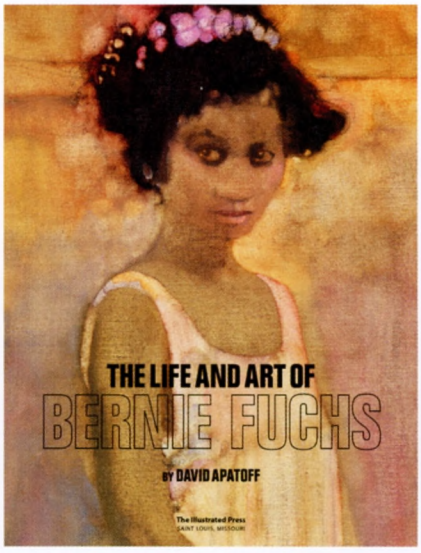

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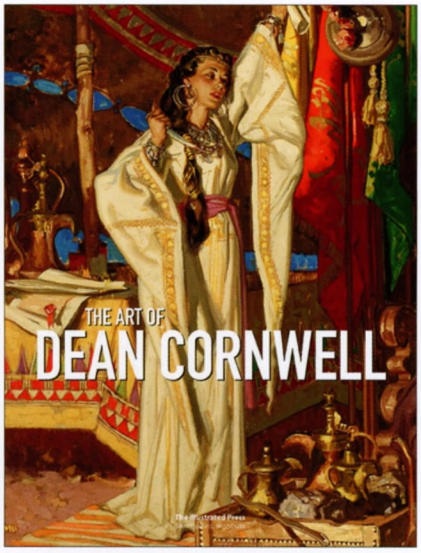

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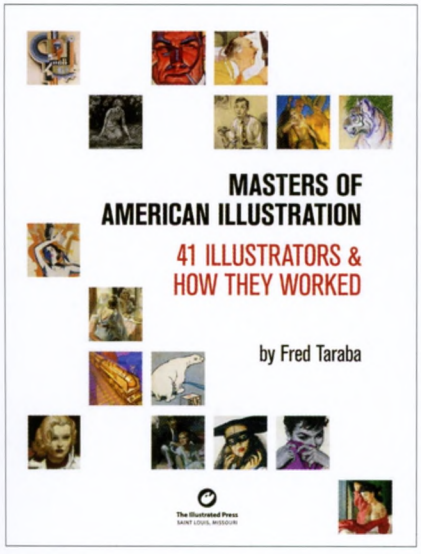

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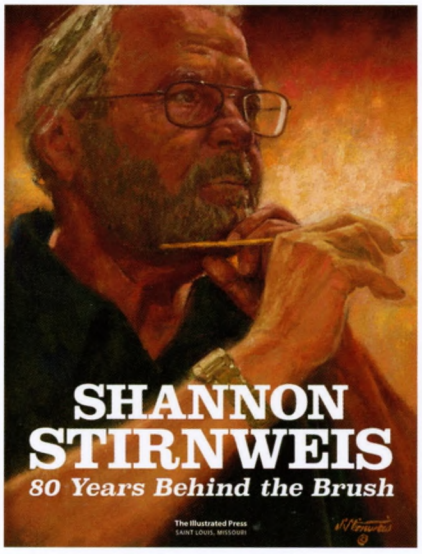

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